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THE MALIGNED KHEDIVE

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ISMAIL

THE MALIGNED KHEDIVE

By

PIERRE CRABITÈS

Author of "Gordon, the Sudan, and Slavery"

With a portrait of Ismail



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PREFACE

THOUGH my name appears on the title page of this book, it is not I who have written it. It is a compilation. I have collected the source material, and allowed it to deliver its own message.

I have done this because these pages challenge a historical heresy. They refuse to join in the chorus led by Milner, Colvin, and Cromer, and to agree that Ismail Pasha, the first Khedive of Egypt, was a spendthrift, a voluptuary, and a thief. Upon such a matter my personal opinion is of no value, but not even great names can stand up against facts and figures culled from official sources.

Over fifty years have now elapsed since Ismail the Maligned was sent into exile. The moment has come in which the truth about his reign may be sought from contemporary evidence of unassailable authenticity. Were this book, in the strict sense of the term, my own, it could but assert my opinion as against that of an unbroken phalanx of eminent historians. From the work as now presented my personality is absent.

My array of proof is a challenge to the statements of authors of high repute. I refuse to accept either their affirmations or their deductions. I adduce citations from contemporary records to disprove what they have advanced in good faith, but without going to the root of the matter. I attack a legend which has almost been converted into a dogma. I

do so, not with verbal pyrotechnics or invective, but with quotation marks and footnotes. Demonstration of the truth is to be preferred to the pride of authorship.

PIERRE CRABITÈS.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My thanks are due to His Majesty, King Fuad I of Egypt, for having given me unrestrained and unconditional access to the Royal Egyptian Archives. It was there that I found all the unpublished source material referred to in this volume.

It is true that many of my footnotes mention the American Legation at Cairo. It was, however, at Abdine Palace that I first saw the texts cited by me. The Royal Egyptian Legation at Washington had received permission from the American Department of State to make photostatic copies of the American Archives in Washington which deal with the reign of Khedive Ismail. I used this authentic secondary evidence in writing this book, as I preferred to abstain from making a request of the American Minister accredited to Cairo which might have embarrassed him.

I should like to take advantage of this opportunity to pay tribute to the admirable manner in which the Royal Egyptian Archives are kept under the efficient management of my friend, Joseph Gélât Bey, Director of the European Section of the Cabinet of His Majesty the King of Egypt.

I have also to thank all those who have permitted me to quote from the other works cited in these pages, especially Messrs. Edward Arnold and Co. in regard of Elgood's *Transit of Egypt*; the Columbia

University Press in regard of Hallberg's *The Suez Canal* ; Macmillan and Co. Ltd. for Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt* ; the Viscountess Milner and Messrs. Edward Arnold and Co. for Lord Milner's *England in Egypt* ; Messrs. Rivingtons for Dicey's *Story of the Khedivate* ; Seeley Service and Co. Ltd. as regards *The Making of Modern Egypt* ; and the Marquess of Zetland as regards his *Life of Lord Cromer*.

PIERRE CRABITÈS.

CAIRO.

4th July, 1933.

ISMAIL THE MALIGNED

CHAPTER I

THE RAPE OF EGYPT

THE *firman* the stout sword of Muhammad Ali wrung from the Sultan transmitted the viceregal sceptre to the eldest prince of the dynasty which that intrepid Albanian had created. It respected the traditions of Islam, whose idea of primogeniture was not that of the Occident. On the contrary, it decreed that the throne should pass to Muhammad Ali's eldest living descendant, regardless of his relationship to his predecessor. It thus came to pass that, although the creator of modern Egypt left several sons, he was succeeded by his grandson, Abbas Pasha.

The new ruler was a combination of intellectual nonentity, coward, and fanatic. He was capricious and reactionary. He despised European procedure and progress. He dreaded Christian influence upon Egypt. "My grandfather," he was accustomed to say, "thought himself an autocrat. He was one to his subjects and to his children : but to the Consuls of Europe he was no more than a shoe. If I must submit to someone, let me be then the servant of the Khalif, and not of the Christians whom I hate."¹

Abbas was a recluse. Seldom seen by his people, he locked himself up in fortified palaces hidden away

¹ *The Transit of Egypt*, by Lieut.-Col. P. G. Elgood, London (Edward Arnold), 1928, p. 54.

in the desert or near the sea.¹ There, in such an entrenched retreat, surrounded only by a few cringing slaves, and by the savage beasts he had collected into menageries, he was as solitary in death as he had been in life. Tradition has it that he was strangled while he slept by two of his own slaves, boys sent to him from Constantinople by a kinswoman. But the exact manner in which he passed away is still a mystery. All that seems certain is that he was murdered, and that after his death a ghastly farce was enacted in which his corpse played the star part.

Edwin de Leon, at one time American Consul-General at Cairo, gives an account of this macabre performance. He writes :—

“ Summoned secretly and suddenly from Cairo, at the dead of night, to the Benha palace, twenty miles from Cairo, where the deed was done, Elfy Bey, the Governor of Cairo, gave strict orders that no one should divulge the death of Abbas. Ordering the state carriage to be brought to the private entrance, assisted by the head eunuch, he placed the body in a sitting posture within it, and taking his own seat opposite as usual, drove the twenty miles to Cairo, surrounded by guards and the usual state, in this ghastly companionship. He reached the citadel at Cairo with his mute companion, without exciting suspicion, aided by the habitual shrinking from observation which characterized his master ; and once there, caused the guns of the citadel to be pointed on the city, strongly reinforced the garrison, and declared the truth, together with his intention of

¹ *Essai diplomatiques, Nouvelle série*, par Conte Benedetti, Paris (Librairie Plon), 1897, p. 48.

proclaiming El-Hami Viceroy in defiance of the rights of Said." ¹

The prince to whom this cold-blooded stage-manager sought to transfer his master's throne was Abbas Pasha's eldest son. The man whom he would fain have superseded was Muhammad Said Pasha, the dead ruler's uncle, a son of Muhammad Ali. With troops massed and guns trained on the capital, the imperial firman would probably have been brushed aside had not diplomatic pressure put the fear of God into the breast of the intriguing Governor. It seems, from what de Leon has written, that he and the British representative, Sir Frederick Bruce, gave friendly but formal warning to Elfy Bey to abandon his treasonable designs. Their advice was heeded, and the rightful heir installed without delay.

Muhammad Said Pasha had been carefully educated by an accomplished French tutor, Koenig Bey. He was a man of liberal views, and extremely fond of associating with Europeans, whose manners and customs he adopted save for preferring the variety of polygamy to the monotony of monogamy. He spoke French with ease and relative correctness; he had also a working knowledge of English. One of the friends of his youth had been Ferdinand de Lesseps, the wizard of the Suez Canal. Their fathers had been intimate; the boys inherited this mutual good will.

The elder de Lesseps, Mathieu by name, was a French diplomat. When the Treaty of Amiens (1802) made it possible for France to send a consul to Cairo, he was chosen for the post. Muhammad

¹ *The Khedive's Egypt, or the Old House of Bondage under new Masters*, by Edwin de Leon. London (Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington), 1877, p. 87.

Ali, then an obscure officer in the Turkish army, was, for some reason, invited to a banquet given at the French Consulate. It was discovered the next day that one of the guests had carried away a number of the silver forks and spoons. Suspicion fell on the young Albanian, largely because he had been the humblest person present. His baggy trousers, it was pointed out, made it easy for him to hide the theft. Disgrace threatened him. But Frenchmen always love making what they call an *enquête*. De Lesseps did so, *pour l'honneur de la France et de ses invités*. The inquiry completely exonerated Muhammad Ali, and fastened the blame elsewhere. The consul sought out the maligned subaltern and gave him public evidence of his host's esteem.¹

After the swing of the pendulum which made the unknown man of 1802 into the great ruler of 1832, Muhammad Ali did not forget this little incident. He publicly referred to it when Ferdinand de Lesseps, then French diplomatic agent at Cairo, came with the consular corps to congratulate the viceroy upon his son's victories in Syria. And thus, one may infer, the theft of these forks and spoons played a large part in the subsequent relations between France and Egypt.²

Muhammad Said's fondness for macaroni also helped to write an important chapter in history. It seems that when a boy he was inclined to be very fat. His father detested obese children, and wanted his son to have an athletic figure. Orders were therefore given that for two solid hours a day the youth

¹ *Ferdinand de Lesseps, Sa Vie, Son Oeuvre*, par Alphonse Bertrand et Emile Ferrier, Paris (Charpentier), 1887, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*

should climb the mast of one of the boats anchored in the Nile, then jump the rope, row for a while, and afterwards run round the walls of the city. The viceroy also restricted Muhammad Said to a very simple diet, and, to safeguard the child's morals, instructions were given him that he should visit no other house than that of Mathieu de Lesseps.

Between the young prince and the youthful Ferdinand de Lesseps a strong friendship sprang up. Both of them revelled in devouring immense quantities of spaghetti.¹ This intimacy and his longing for *pasta* caused Muhammad Said to hurry to the French consulate whenever the frugal diet of the viceregal table left a void in his stomach. In time, Mathieu de Lesseps was transferred to Paris. The young Egyptian was sent there to complete his education. Both his heart and his stomach directed his steps to the de Lesseps' household. There he and Ferdinand de Lesseps renewed their friendship, and cemented it over bountiful dishes of macaroni.

When the two young men were revelling in the joys of the Latin Quarter, de Lesseps did not suspect that their intimacy would subsequently alter one of the great trade routes of the world. His attention was not as yet riveted upon the Isthmus of Suez. But the Nile beckoned to him. When finally he hearkened to its appeal, the map of Egypt assumed a new significance in his eyes. It seemed to tell him that a waterway ought to marry the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, and that he must be the High Priest to perform the ceremony. He was not an engineer. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." He

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

convinced himself that there were no scientific difficulties in the way. He brushed aside the financial stumbling-block. He determined that when the exigencies of his diplomatic career should permit, he would form a company to construct "the straits of Suez".

De Lesseps was marking time and temporarily unassigned, when news reached him that Abbas Pasha had died, and that Muhammad Said had succeeded to the viceregal sceptre. He was at this time a gentleman farmer, and when the information was brought to him was on the roof of his home doing some carpentry. He at once put down his hammer, descended the ladder, pulled off his overalls, and sat down at his table to write a letter of congratulation to his chum. He knew how to wield a pen. A quick thinker, he put his soul into what he wrote. He had long ago promised himself that if ever Muhammad Said became Viceroy of Egypt he would retire from the diplomatic service, get a concession for a canal across the Isthmus of Suez, and, by placing France in control of that strategic waterway, make his country mistress of the seas.

De Lesseps' letter, of course, went into no such details. It had but one immediate objective—simple and well-defined, but not too obvious. He wanted to be invited to visit the new sovereign. So skilfully were his compliments worded and marshalled that the return mail brought the coveted command. He lost no time in getting under way. He reached Alexandria on 5th November, 1854, carrying in his portmanteau a detailed memorandum dealing with his pet project.

The viceroy welcomed de Lesseps with open arms. Shortly afterwards, Muhammad Said left for Cairo by way of the Libyan desert. An army of 11,000 men accompanied him. De Lesseps joined the party. "One morning at about five," the latter's pen has recorded, "the camp was all astir. I looked to my right, and beheld the East bright and full of promise. Then I glanced towards the left. The West was dark and covered with clouds. All at once a rainbow of surprising beauty charmed my vision, running from east to west. I saw in this heavenly manifestation that sign of the covenant spoken of in the Scriptures. I felt that the day had come for me to discuss matters with Said."¹

But four o'clock in the evening came, and the longed-for opportunity had not presented itself. The Frenchman was beside himself with disappointment; his urbanity, however, remained unruffled. The opening came in an unexpected way. Muhammad Said had grown tired, and had ordered his men to halt and practise target shooting. The distance was 500 metres. As none of the marksmen could hit the bull's-eye, de Lesseps explained to them how they should hold their guns to get the best results. When the viceroy saw this, he sent for his carbine. His guest understood what this meant, and asked permission to try his hand. His shot was aimed true, for, as his biographers put it, he was aiming at something greater than a mere target.

In his own graphic language de Lesseps describes what happened next. "The Pasha's countenance was wreathed in smiles," he writes. "He grasped

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

my hand and held it for an instant ; then he bade me sit beside him upon the divan. We were alone. Through the open tent I saw the beautiful setting of that sun whose resplendent rising had so moved my soul. My studies and reflections about the Canal passed rapidly through my mind. I felt that I had such complete knowledge of the subject that it would be easy for me to inoculate the Prince with the same supreme confidence that I felt. I therefore set forth my ideas without entering into details. Said followed my presentation with interest and attention. I entreated him that if any lingering doubts beset him, he should do me the honour to let me hear them. He put to me, with rare judgment, several pertinent questions. My replies must have satisfied him, for he turned to me and said : ' You have convinced me. I accept your plan. During the remainder of our trip we will work out ways and means for carrying out your idea. The matter is settled. You may count implicitly upon me.' " ¹

De Lesseps struck while the iron was hot. On 30th November, 1854, the viceregal decree of investiture was signed. Several of its articles have been amended, but its essential features have remained unchanged. It constitutes, at the present moment, the fundamental law of the *Société Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez*. In a word, the fat boy of the day before yesterday, who overloaded his stomach with macaroni, and who had become the inexperienced sovereign of the day after, allowed the experienced French diplomatist to capitalize the friendship of

¹ "Ferdinand de Lesseps and the Suez Canal," by Pierre Crabitès, *XIX Century and After*, Oct., 1926.

their youth and to extract from his simple-mindedness an invaluable concession.

De Lesseps used this leverage of personal intimacy to do more than put into his pocket a priceless franchise. He inveigled the confiding Muhammad Said into scrapping overnight the policy of his resourceful father. Muhammad Ali had stoutly refused to hear of an Isthmian canal. He was illiterate, but he was canny. He read not books, but the hearts of men. He took the view that if a waterway were cut from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, the blending of their waters would swamp the independence of Egypt. But he did not adopt a "dog-in-the-manger" attitude. On the contrary, when Sir Henry (afterwards Viscount) Hardinge passed through Egypt in 1844 on his way to take up his duties as Governor-General of India, the astute Muhammad Ali viewed with favour the elaboration of a treaty between Egypt and England which should guarantee to the latter a free, safe, and rapid transit across Egyptian territory.¹

The Egyptian people of the forties, fifties, and sixties of the last century attached great importance to this transit trade. The Peninsula and Oriental Steamship Company and other lines of navigation maintained a service between Alexandria and England, and another between Suez and India. They subsidized hotels at Alexandria and Suez. They had elaborate arrangements for transferring mails, passengers, and rapid freight between the two ports. Quite an important industry depended upon this transit

¹ *Le Conflit Turco-Egyptien de 1838-1841 et les dernières années du règne de Mohamed Aly d'après les documents diplomatiques Grecs*, par Athanase G. Politis, *Société Royale d'Égypte*, 1931, p. 146.

business. Writers who spoke of Egypt in the seventies looked upon the Suez Canal as a commercial handicap to Egypt. One of the earlier judges of the Egyptian International or Mixed Courts, a Dutchman, burst into print on the subject.

"The Suez Canal and the French overlordship were distasteful to the Egyptians," he wrote. "'It is Egypt,' they said, 'which has paid all or practically all the bill for digging this canal. It is cut across the desert, and is a long way removed from the delta. It has deprived us of that international passage-way business which made Egypt a thoroughfare, and was bound to increase. De Lesseps deceived Muhammad Said and Ismail. He made them think that the canal would be not only a glory for Egypt, but a great thing for the country.'"¹

The ex-Khedive of Egypt, writing as late as 1930, concurs in the Dutch Judge's remarks. He says :—

"The gigantic work of the Suez Canal, worthy of the land which witnessed the colossal undertakings of the mightiest Pharaohs of long past ages, never fails to strike the imagination. . . . Ah ! It is true that the Canal has proven highly remunerative to the Company which exploits it ; but Egypt has never obtained the smallest advantage ; on the contrary the Canal has been the principal cause of Egypt's miseries."²

Professor Charles W. Hallberg, of Syracuse University, U.S.A., who published in 1931 an authoritative work entitled *The Suez Canal*, apparently

¹ *L'Egypte et L'Europe*, par un ancien Juge Mixte, Leiden (E. J. Brill), s.d., vol. i, p. 46.

² *A Few Words on the Anglo-Egyptian Settlement*, by Abbas Hilmy, London (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.), p. 33.

agrees with the Judge who resigned and the deposed sovereign, for he writes :—

“ For Egypt, the Canal has not been what de Lesseps had predicted, and there are many Egyptians who no doubt wish it had never been constructed.”¹

It would be a mistake to infer from all this that Ferdinand de Lesseps was intellectually or pecuniarily dishonest. He was not. He was an incorrigible optimist. He had a hobby, and was enamoured of it. He inoculated Muhammad Said with his own enthusiasm. But he had everything to gain and nothing to lose. He was, as the Dutch Judge whose words we have cited expressed it, *l'homme le plus désintéressé du monde. Il n'a ni soif des richesses, ni la passion vaniteuse de la dépense.* But if de Lesseps was thus “ the most disinterested person in the world—a man who did not thirst for riches ”, he was a private citizen and could give rein to his enthusiasm. Muhammad Said, on the other hand, was an autocrat, and is to be judged by other standards. The viceroy was a trustee for the interests of his people. Though he did not know it, he was morally responsible to them. He owed it to his conscience and to his wards to look before he leapt, to ponder well before he overturned the policy of the founder of his dynasty, to think twice before he defied the traditional rights of important Egyptian vested interests. A chief of State who granted a concession with the levity with which Muhammad Said gave away the franchise to dig the Suez Canal wrote his own epitaph and drew his own moral portrait in the act.

¹ *The Suez Canal : Its History and Diplomatic Importance*, by Charles W. Hallberg, New York (Columbia University Press), 1931, p. 375.

Count Benedetti, whom Bismarck turned round his little finger at Ems, refers to de Lesseps' friend as a weakling who was a coward, and, unable to dominate men, disdained them while at the same time showering favours upon them.¹ This description does not apply to the viceroy's attitude to the French diplomatist. It stresses, nevertheless, the manner in which he disposed of his patrimony for a mess of pottage. But of his chum he did not exact even so much as "bread and pottage of lentiles". He sold the Frenchman the birthright of the Pharaohs for a thing so ethereal as a smile.

The official concession, dated 30th November, 1854, bears out this sweeping statement. Its very first six words, "*Notre ami M. Ferdinand de Lesseps,*" should be printed in bold black type. Italics would not suffice to give proper emphasis to their import. In their original French, they boil down into twenty-seven letters all the calories, vitamins, and proteins in this epoch-making document. They do more; they bring out the poison latent in it. Cervantes's homely maxim has it that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating". Of the eating of the pudding more will be said anon. Here is the first paragraph of its original recipe as prepared by the French chef:—

"Our friend, M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, having called our attention to the advantage which would accrue to Egypt from joining together the Mediterranean and the Red Sea by a navigable waterway accessible to large vessels, and having made known to us the possibility of constituting for that purpose a company composed of capitalists of all nations, we

¹ *Essais diplomatiques*, par Benedetti, p. 48.

have viewed with favour the proposals which he has submitted to us, and we have given and do give him by these presents full power to form and manage a universal company for the piercing of the Isthmus of Suez and the exploitation of a canal between the two seas . . . the whole as set forth in the following articles." ¹

The covering letter which accompanied this concession further stresses the personal factor thus so indubitably emphasized. It need not be given in full : its heading suffices. It runs : "*A mon dévoué ami, de haute naissance et de rang élevé, M. Ferdinand de Lesseps.*" ² It is almost impossible to put this caption into idiomatic English without paraphrasing it. Its effusiveness is so Gallic that it practically defies translation. It may be summarized as : "To my devoted friend of distinguished birth and high rank, M. Ferdinand de Lesseps."

The great charter contains twelve articles, which need not be reproduced. They deal with a subject of which the obese sovereign knew nothing until 15th November, 1854, that day which began with a rainbow and ended up with target practice. He was then in the desert. Pen and ink, or at all events wax and parchment, were probably not to be found in the camp equipment. Several days still separated him from his capital. When we recall how prone Orientals are to procrastinate, the fact that the elaborate deed was signed within fifteen days after Muhammad Said had first pledged his princely troth speaks volumes for his childlike ingenuousness and infantile gullibility.

Men of clear vision are often swept off their feet by

¹ Bertrand et Ferrier, *op. cit.*, p. 49. ² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

the blandishments of a high-power salesman. The adroit promoter can sell almost anything to anybody ; the magic of his charm is often irresistible. But when hours become days, days weeks, and weeks months, his strangle-hold usually weakens. De Lesseps' grip upon Muhammad Said never once relaxed ; it grew stronger as months turned into years. On 5th January, 1856, the viceroy gave his intimate friend a second concession. Here again we find in the opening paragraph a reference to the original franchise granted " to our friend M. Ferdinand de Lesseps ". At the end there is the self-same reference to "*mon dévoué ami de haute naissance et de rang élevé, Monsieur Ferdinand de Lesseps*".

The new deed amplifies the provisions of the original one. It ties the knot tighter. It waterproofs the wax and parchment so that not even the humidity of the atmosphere may warp the force of what was nominated in the bond. And, to make assurance double sure, to gild the lily as it were, Muhammad Said added a codicil to this concession, dated 20th July, 1856. A few lines of it may well be quoted.

"The labourers employed in the digging of the Canal shall be furnished by the Egyptian Government upon the requisition of the engineers of the Company and as their requirements may necessitate."¹

If the Concession granted by Muhammad Said to his "devoted friend of distinguished birth and high rank, M. Ferdinand de Lesseps", was a pudding, this memorandum of 20th July, 1856, was a condiment proving that Cervantes would have been more accurate had he affirmed that "the proof of the pudding is

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

in the eating of the sauce". For Article I of the definitive concession of 5th January, 1856, reads in substance that :—

"The company is granted the right to dig the canal itself or to give out the work to a contractor. In either case at least four-fifths of the labourers shall be Egyptians."

There was nothing objectionable in such a clause. It was a perfectly reasonable provision that might well have been proclaimed from the house-tops, and probably was. At all events, one of the first public men to whom de Lesseps appealed for moral support in launching his campaign was Richard Cobden.¹ That great Free Trader, and the Liberals with whom he consorted, were opponents of slavery. It will be recalled that he and John Bright were among the very few prominent Englishmen who sided with the North during the American Civil War. It was their antagonism to slavery that caused them to take this stand.

It would have been suicidal for de Lesseps to incorporate, in his published concession, the terms of that memorandum of 20th July, 1856. This note meant that he intended to build the new waterway of civilization with *corvée* labour. Had he disclosed this fact to Cobden, had he even permitted him to guess the truth, the Englishman's eloquence and tenacity would have raised such a howl that Lord Palmerston would have marshalled British public opinion and prevented the execution of a work upon which London frowned and kept on frowning until in 1875 Disraeli bought out the Khedive's holdings.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

CHAPTER II

THE DOWNWARD PATH

It was not until 25th April, 1859, that sand began to fly in the Isthmus of Suez. Practically four and a half years separate this date from that of the original concession. De Lesseps had had innumerable difficulties to overcome; he met them with an invincible courage. But even his magnetic optimism would not have sufficed had English statesmanship been able to appeal to the Nonconformist conscience of the rank and file of the Liberal electorate. It seems strange that Lord Palmerston did not drive home the message that the Frenchman contemplated using the blood and sweat of *corvée* labour to dig his way from Suez to the Mediterranean.

The man who thought in terms of *civis romanus sum* should have known that, whatever the concessions of 30th November, 1854, and 5th January, 1856, may have said, Muhammad Said was so absolutely committed to the cause of slavery that it was almost inconceivable that *corvée* labour would not be employed in constructing the Suez Canal. The history of the Sudan was there to drive this point home. The presence at Cairo of slave-traders entrenched in the seats of the mighty was so obvious as to proclaim the self-evident through a megaphone.

There is some controversy regarding the motives that called Muhammad Ali to the Sudan in 1820. For centuries the Black Country had been more or

less closed to Egypt. The clear-thinking Albanian decided to invade this vast territory. His son, Ibrahim Pasha, carried the Egyptian flag far into what was then Darkest Africa. Dr. Sabry, an Egyptian who recently published an authoritative history of the reign of Muhammad Ali, says that that leader of men sent this army to the south in order to find "in that vast country of slaves the man-power necessary for the formation of his new armies".¹

During the years when old age weakened Muhammad Ali's hold upon affairs, Khartoum had become a central market for a huge slave trade. When Abbas came into power his satellites were not satisfied with handling the slave business that came into that metropolis; they organized armed bands which went out to capture slaves. They led *razzias*, as these marauding expeditions against surrounding tribes were called. They introduced system into slave-driving. They took the local government men into partnership with them. They ran things with a high hand, and made slave-raiding pay.

Abbas had but a short reign. "Muhammad Said," writes Colonel Elgood in his masterly *Transit of Egypt*, "was a well-meaning man, who introduced many reforms. . . . He forbade the slave trade and the use of the kourbash by administrative officials."² Like most reformers, he promised a great deal and accomplished little or nothing.

The memorandum issued by Muhammad Said on 20th July, 1856, almost makes us doubt whether

¹ *L'Empire Egyptien sous Mohammed-Ali et la Question d'Orient* (1811-1849), par M. Sabry, Paris (Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner), p. 68.

² p. 55.

his anti-slavery professions were sincere even when made. The way in which he dragooned *corvée* labour to work on the Suez Canal compels us to say that after 25th April, 1858, he was no longer opposed to slavery. But all this is beside the issue. The point relevant to a proper appreciation of the character of Ismail the Maligned is the fact that slavery and slave-traders were in power in Egypt when he succeeded to the viceregal throne on 18th January, 1863.

Not only was Egypt then in the hands of the slave-traders, but Ferdinand de Lesseps had converted it into what was, in some ways, a satrapy of France. We have already pointed out that the Dutch Judge who resigned from the Mixed Courts of Egypt in 1879 said that the Egyptians objected to the overlordship of France. When we recall that Napoleon III, through de Lesseps, prevailed upon Muhammad Said to send Egyptian *Kanonfuter* to Mexico, we can readily visualize the extent of French influence in the Nile Valley when that prince was on the throne.

It appears that England, Spain, and France misinterpreted the meaning of the action of Jefferson Davis and the Confederates in opening fire on Fort Sumter on 12th April, 1861. The South was not attacking the Monroe Doctrine. That sheet-anchor of American public policy was probably the only question upon which Washington and Montgomery were then in accord. But London, Madrid, and Paris thought otherwise. They agreed, on 17th December, 1861, to intervene in Mexico, and thus sought to tear the Monroe Doctrine to shreds. The battle of Bull Run had been fought on 21st July, 1861, and they felt that they could afford to be assertive. When the

Northern forces got into their stride England and Spain saw the wisdom of retreating. But Napoleon III was obdurate. He refused to evacuate Mexico.

He soon saw, however, that he needed troops. Experience taught him that his crack white regiments could not stand the climate of the Mexican lowlands. Yellow fever decimated them. Black regiments from Guadeloupe and Martinique were summoned, and came. But fighting was not their speciality. They resisted disease, but they did not withstand the shock of battle. Paris was in a quandary ; it did not know what to do. De Lesseps was a popular hero in those days. His fame called up the name of Egypt. Somebody suggested that Muhammad Said could supply the black man-power which would stop both bullets and fever.

France, in submitting her suggestion to the viceroy, did not ask permission to recruit black soldiers in the Sudan. Her proposal was put in the shape of a request for the temporary grant of a regiment of 1,200 men completely equipped with its own officers and petty officers. Paris obviously intended to ask for more at a later date. Four hundred and fifty of these black Egyptians or Sudanese sailed from Alexandria on 28th December, 1862, aboard the frigate *La Seine*, commanded by Captain Jaurès.¹

We see by this date that eighteen days before Muhammad Said died, he definitely committed Egypt to share in a devastating war in a distant land. It was obvious that nothing which might take place in Mexico could be of any benefit to Cairo. This stupid participation in Napoleon's mad adventure

¹ See official report by Raveret and Dillard.

implied but one thing, namely, that the viceroy was so completely obsessed by his French sympathies that when he died the world looked upon him as being nothing but an automaton moved by French strings. In a word, he bequeathed to his successor a people bound hand and foot in favour of the Suez Canal Company, a territory to the south where slave *razzias* were the order of the day, and a foreign policy dictated by Paris. He also left him debts.

Elgood writes :—

“He [Muhammad Said] early acquired a taste for spending, which the revenues of Egypt could not satisfy, and to meet the deficiency, he had recourse to the money-lenders of Europe. He borrowed extravagantly on the security of Egypt, in 1858, in 1861 and in the following year.”¹

Benedetti is equally specific. He records :—

“He was accessible to persons who became perfidious counsellors and took advantage of his confidence. Launched upon this incline he soon became a prodigal prince loaded down with debt. It was suggested to him that he negotiate Treasury bonds. They were placed at usurious rates of interest. The first financial troubles which have subsequently affected the finances of Egypt so profoundly go back, it behoves us to remember, to this period.”²

De Freycinet, who was Prime Minister of France in 1882 when England occupied Egypt, is just as categorical as Elgood or Benedetti :—

“When Said Pasha died he bequeathed to his successor a debt of 250,000,000 francs. This legacy

¹ Elgood, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

² Benedetti, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

was the starting-point for the financial embarrassment which caused Egypt's troubles and destroyed her independence. Ismail Pasha, whose personal tastes were expensive, finding an involved situation, first sought to smooth it out and soon aggravated it."¹

De Malortie tells the same tale :—

"He [Muhammad Said] left to his successor a debt of £10,000,000, a rotten administration, great disorder, and, in addition, that, for Egypt, disastrous Suez Canal concession with all its ruinous charges, which that great charmer, M. de Lesseps, got him to sign without ever having read it, as I was assured by one of his own Ministers. The greatest discontent existed from one end of the country to the other."²

In a footnote on the same page this writer adds :—

"When Said Pasha died in 1863, the foreign debt of the country was only £3,000,000 (but his debts amounted to over three times this sum)."

De Leon, another contemporary writer, strikes the same note:—

"If the early morn of Said Pasha's reign was bright and smiling with promise, its close was dark and dreary . . . He mounted the throne in 1854, a gay, hopeful, ardent man, with vigorous health, boundless power and almost inexhaustible wealth. He left it but nine years later for a premature grave ; his strength wasted to childish weakness by disease and trouble ; hope, fortune, friends all lost . . . At my last interview with him, he expressed deep regret that he had saddled his country with a public loan

¹ *La Question d'Egypte*, par C. de Freycinet, Paris (Calmann-Lévy), s.d., p. 137.

² *Egypt, Native Rulers and Foreign Interference*, by Baron de Malortie, London (William Ridgway), 1882, p. 71.

and public debt. When he died, I believe the public debt of Egypt did not exceed £5,000,000.”¹

Another writer, an Englishman who speaks most disparagingly of Ismail Pasha, records that:—

“Ismail ruled over Egypt for sixteen years. Said, his predecessor, contracted the first Egyptian loan, the amount being about three millions and a half sterling, and he bequeathed this, as well as a floating debt, to his nephew and successor, the whole liability being equal to ten millions.”²

Lord Cromer in *Modern Egypt* sets forth that “in 1863, when Said Pasha died, the public debt of Egypt amounted to £3,293,000”.³

Further on in the same work he adds :—

“It was Said who first invited European adventurers to prey on Egypt. Nubar Pasha, who could speak with authority on this subject, used to say : *C'est au temps de Saïd que le commencement de la débâcle a eu lieu*. Intelligent observers on the spot were able to foretell the storm which was eventually to burst over Egypt. In 1855, Mr. Walne, the British Consul at Cairo, said to Mr. Senior :—

‘Said Pasha is rash and flighty and conceited, and is spoilt by the flattery of the foreigners who surround him. They tell him, and he believes them, that he is a universal genius. He undoes everything, does very little, and I fear is preparing us for some great catastrophe.’ ”⁴

¹ *The Khedive's Egypt*, by Edwin de Leon, London (Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington), 1877, p. 100.

² *Egypt To-day*, by W. Fraser Rae, London (Richard Bentley & Son), 1892, p. 3.

³ *Modern Egypt*, by the Earl of Cromer, New York (The Macmillan Company), 1908, vol. i, p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 21.

Sir Auckland Colvin, Lord Cromer's able coadjutor in the regeneration of Egypt, published two years before his chief's book a work entitled *The Making of Modern Egypt*, in which he says :—

"Said Pasha, though he passed a liberal land law, conferring valuable rights on the cultivating occupants of the land, contributed largely to their misery by the Suez Canal Concession, entailing on them forced labour in its most intensive and unremunerative form. . . . The total debt of Egypt on the accession of Ismail Pasha, in 1863, was less than £4,000,000 sterling; when, in 1879, he left the country, it amounted to over £100,000,000 sterling."¹

Viscount (then Mr. Alfred) Milner was Sir Auckland Colvin's associate in the work of redeeming Egypt. His figures differ a little from those of the author just quoted. We read in *England in Egypt* :—

"When Ismail came to the throne in 1863, the debt of Egypt was only a little over three millions. The annual revenue of the country was amply sufficient to meet all needful expenditure, yet by the end of 1876 the debt had risen to eighty-nine millions."²

The Marquess of Zetland introduces a new element into the picture. He refers to the "modest debt" which existed when Muhammad Said died :—

"In 1863 Said, Viceroy of Egypt, died, leaving the country with a modest public debt of something less than three and a half millions sterling."³

¹ *The Making of Modern Egypt*, by Sir Auckland Colvin, London (Seeley & Co.), 1906, p. 8.

² *England in Egypt*, by Viscount Milner, London (Edward Arnold), 1904, p. 177.

³ *Lord Cromer*, by the Marquess of Zetland, London (Hodder & Stoughton), 1923, p. 55.

The official report submitted in 1876 by the Cave Commission tells us :—

“In 1862 Said Pasha contracted the first loan. The nominal amount was £3,292,800 repayable in thirty years ; the interest was 7 per cent and the sinking fund 1 per cent. We have no particulars of the amount really received by this loan.”¹

It will be observed that the figures given by these different authors vary from the £10,000,000 fixed by de Freycinet, Rae, and de Malortie, to the £3,292,800 given by Lord Cromer and the Cave Report. This difference is explained by Rae's reference to floating debts. It is also touched upon by the German economist, Heinrich Stephan, who published, in 1872, an interesting book on Egypt entitled *Das heutige Ägypten*. He analyses the Egyptian budget of 1870, and speaks of a loan contracted by Said Pasha in 1862. He then adds that this figure does not cover that sovereign's private debts (*Privatenanleihen*) which have been largely wiped out.²

The question may be asked, why have not the original records been consulted if it be so important to know exactly what debts, if any, Muhammad Said Pasha “bequeathed” to Ismail Pasha? The answer will not be difficult to guess when it is recalled that the Cave Report contains the following paragraph :—

“It has been said that the public accounts, as well as those of the Daira Sanieh, have been made with a view to deceive. It seems possible that an

¹ See *Report of the Cave Commission*, published as Appendix G to *Egypt as It Is*, by J. C. McCoan, London (Cassell, Petter & Galpin), s.d., p. 392.

² *Das heutige Ägypten*, von Heinrich Stephan, Leipzig (F. A. Brockhaus), 1872, p. 229.

intricate statement may be preferred for the purpose of retaining power in the hands of the Finance Minister, in whose office no European is at present employed, or even allowed to enter.”¹

The truth of the matter is, that these old books were kept by Coptic accountants who purposely evolved a complicated system of book-keeping. They did so, not for the purpose of robbing anybody or of aiding the Finance Minister, but in order to reserve to themselves and their co-religionists a monopoly of the accountancy service of the Egyptian Government. They handed down from father to son a more or less secret system of accounts. To attempt to get at the truth of these books to-day, even if they could be found, would cost a mint of money and might be “love’s labour lost”. The essential deduction to be drawn from these figures is that their exact sum is of secondary importance. What counts is the salient factor, that, whatever their amount may be, they justified two Frenchmen, close to the Quai d’Orsay, in saying that “the legacy left by Muhammad Said was the starting-point for the financial embarrassment which caused Egypt’s troubles”, and they also warranted the British Consul in reporting to London, as early as 1855, that Muhammad Said was sealing Egypt’s doom.

General William W. Loring, an American who served in the Egyptian Army at a time when the memory of Muhammad Said’s reign was still green, wrote :—

“The unfortunate people of Egypt welcomed Said’s accession to the throne with delight, deeming

¹ *Cave Report in Egypt as It Is*, by McCoan, Appendix G, p. 388.

any change from the rule of Abbas a gain to them ; but they soon had reason to lament the heavy weight of taxation laid upon them by their new ruler. Said's policy was capricious and oppressive, and was marked by changes so sudden and so radical as to create something like a convulsion in the state. When neglect and extravagance had brought the government to the brink of financial chaos, Said startled the country by a decree dismissing all important officers of state and announcing his purpose to take all administrative matters into his own hands. A brief experience of the results of this policy cured the Viceroy of his delusion, and the old system was re-established. This disastrous experiment cost Said the respect of the country, and he was thenceforth regarded as an incapable and capricious statesman—a 'crank' invested with despotic power."¹

The prince to whom the friend of Ferdinand de Lesseps thus "bequeathed" the Suez Canal concession, a foreign policy dictated by Paris, a foreign war of no possible advantage to Egypt, the domination of slave-traders, a corrupt administration, burdensome debts, and disrespect for the viceregal throne, was born on 31st December, 1830. He bore the name of Ismail. He was the son of Princess Khouchiar.² He was born at the palace of Mussafer Khan, and was the second son of the celebrated Ibrahim Pasha—the "Abraham Parker" of the London crowd, whose procession through the streets of the metropolis in the forties left a deep impression upon the mind of

¹ *A Confederate in Egypt*, by W. W. Loring, New York (Dodd, Mead & Co.), 1884, p. 47.

² *Le Khedive Ismail et l'Égypte*, par Gaston Zananiri, Alexandrie (Typo-Lithographie nouvelle), 1923, p. 9.

a child who was subsequently to become the great Sir Evelyn Baring and the equally great Lord Cromer.¹

Elbert E. Farman, American Consul-General at Cairo from 1876 to 1881, and subsequently one of the representatives of the United States on the Mixed Courts of Egypt, says that the sovereign upon whose shoulders this heavy burden was thrust was not physically prepossessing. He was short in stature, broad-shouldered, stocky, and corpulent. His complexion was that of a Southern European. His eyelids drooped—the left more than the right. When his features were in repose, his dark eyes seemed half-closed. His eyebrows were dark, coarse, thick, and projecting, and his dark brown beard was cut short.²

Another American Consul-General takes up this refrain, adding :—

“ His face, when in repose, was usually as expressionless as that of the Sphinx or Napoleon III. His voice was that of a gentleman, low, well-modulated, and giving meaning to the most common-place utterances. His words, when he sought to please, were usually accompanied by a smile of ingratiating charm.”³

During the nine years when Muhammad Said was making Egypt for all practical purposes a fief of France and putting the toboggan beneath his country's prosperity, his successor, to quote de Malortie, “ wisely kept in the background, occupying himself with agriculture, and the administration of his immense estates.”⁴ Edwin de Leon, American

¹ Zetland, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

² *Egypt and its Betrayal*, by Elbert E. Farman, New York (The Grafton Press), 1908, p. 9.

³ De Leon, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

⁴ De Malortie, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

Consul-General at Alexandria from 26th November, 1853, to 4th March, 1861, who, as has already been pointed out, affirms that he played a prominent part in transferring the viceregal sceptre from Abbas to Muhammad Said, expresses the same opinion. He writes :—

“ He [Ismail] certainly played Brutus well while his Cæsar lived ; for even his intimates had no conception of the hidden energy and grasping ambition which that smooth manner and guarded speech concealed.”¹

And from the vantage point of a man who moved behind the scenes and whose business it was to know what was going on, the same writer brings out that during the days when Muhammad Said was being more generous to de Lesseps than Esau was to Jacob,

“ Ismail bided his time, devoting himself to agricultural pursuits, shunning publicity through fear of inspiring Said’s jealousy, and acquiring real estate—one of his passions—until he became perhaps the largest landed proprietor in Egypt.”²

Two Frenchmen who visited Egypt during the early days of Ismail’s reign submit the same report. Their words are :—

“ Thanks to the liberality of Muhammad Ali he [Ismail] was one of the richest landowners of Egypt ; it should rather be said that he was the richest. Gifted by nature with that practical common sense and that spirit of economy which create the wealth of a man who manages a plantation, he knew so well how to administer his property and used his revenues so systematically in buying more land that he trebled his fortune. His wheat and his sugar brought the

¹ De Leon, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

² De Leon, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

top price in the open market. Buyers fought to purchase his cotton, because he paid special attention to tilling his soil so as to produce the best crops and to realize the best prices for them. He was pointed out as Egypt's model farmer. But he always kept away from affairs of State." ¹

Lest it be felt that this chorus of Hungarian, American, and French testimony requires contemporary English evidence to add to its probative value, it may not be amiss to quote what J. C. McCoan has to say on this subject :—

"Indefatigable energy, sound judgment, and administrative ability, applied to the management of his private estates, had already [before his accession to the throne] made His Highness [Ismail Pasha] the wealthiest land owner in Egypt." ²

Another Englishman, Moberly Bell, *The Times* correspondent at Cairo, affirms that "before coming to the throne he [Ismail] was known as a thrifty, saving landlord who looked after each piastre." ³

All these statements tend to convince the impartial mind that de Malortie may have been accurately informed when he asserted that :—

"On his accession Ismail Pasha had an income of £160,000 a year in land, no debts, and no mortgages on any of his extensive properties. So I have been informed by several of his ministers." ⁴

During part of the years when Ismail Pasha was

¹ *L'Egypte et Ismail Pasha*, par Amédée Sacré et Louis Outrebon, Paris (Hetzal), 1865, p. 11.

² McCoan, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

³ *Khedives and Pashas, by one who knows them well*. London (Sampson Low, etc.), 1884, p. 11.

⁴ De Malortie, *op. cit.*, p. 71, note.

his country's star farmer, he was not Egypt's heir-apparent. This honour at that time belonged to Prince Ahmed, an elder brother. It was a railway accident that called this Cincinnatus from his plough.

Some four years after his accession to the throne, Muhammad Said gave a great *fantasia* at Alexandria. Commands were addressed to all the princes of the reigning dynasty. Most of them were then in Cairo, including Prince Ahmed, Prince Halim, a younger brother of the viceroy, and Prince Ismail. They all hurried to the city by the sea, except Ismail, who was not well.

The Pasha was a lavish spender. He put on a splendid show. All the guests enjoyed themselves immensely. When the festivities were over, the two Princes, with their retinue of about twenty-five friends and attendants, boarded a special train for Cairo. Midway between the two cities the railway passes over the Nile at Kafr-ez-Zayat. The river was there spanned by a great bridge built by Robert Stephenson. It contained a section that opened and shut to permit the passage of river craft. As the train, bearing its viceregal freight, approached the river, the driver saw, to his horror, that the bridge was open. He applied his brakes. But it was too late. The locomotive dashed into the yawning chasm, and fell into the raging flood fully fifty feet below, dragging all the carriages in its wake. Only one of the occupants escaped, Prince Halim ; all the rest were drowned.

When, with the passing of years, it became evident that the viceroy's days were numbered, courtiers and men who sought to be courtiers were anxious to be the first to convey to the new ruler the tidings of his

accession. Europeans fought with Egyptians for this honour. One of the former felt that as the head of the telegraph company he was in an admirable position to win the longed-for privilege. When word reached him that Muhammad Said could live but a few hours longer, he sat up all night by the side of the telegraph operator so as to be able to carry the message in person to the new Sovereign.

But de Lesseps' friend had a sturdy constitution. He refused to die to scheduled time, and lingered for several days. The tireless vigil finally told on the foreigner's powers of resistance, and he felt that he simply must go home and get a little rest. He summoned a trusted native clerk, of whose fidelity he had no doubt, and told him to come immediately to his home and awaken him should the momentous news arrive during his absence. A handsome baksheesh was promised the loyal employee.

But the man knew as well as his master that the custom of the country conferred rank and gold on whomsoever should bear to a new ruler the expected tidings. The news came as the Frank slept. The native hastened to Ismail, gave the Viceroy the first authentic information of his accession, and at once received the expected promotion and reward. With malicious cunning the trusted clerk then awoke his chief and told him that Muhammad Said was no more. Full of joy and hope, the Manager hastened to the palace. He was contemptuously dismissed as the bearer of belated news. "The perfidious clerk," records de Leon, "is now a Pasha ; his betrayed employer is yet a Bey."¹

¹ De Leon, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

CHAPTER III

THE UPWARD TREND

ISMAIL PASHA was in his thirty-third year when, on 18th January, 1863, he became Viceroy of Egypt. He had been a farmer. He had lived in retirement. His uncle, the dead sovereign, had not encouraged him to participate in affairs of State. He loved the soil. He had been thrifty. He had not thrown away his money. On the contrary, he had put his savings into more acres.

When a man has reached the age of thirty-three his character may be said to be formed. This is particularly true in the Levant, where a woman of thirty-three is already old, and a man beyond the threshold of middle age. Besides, an agriculturalist is a born conservative, and conservatives do not like to adopt new habits. Yet, though Ismail Pasha's age meant that his character was formed when he came to the throne, the latest important work to mention his name, Lord Zetland's *Life of Lord Cromer*, published in the autumn of 1932, refers to "the national profligacy"¹ ushered in by the new ruler, speaks of his villainous reign,² and says that his son, Tewfik Pasha,

"showed himself the possessor of an appreciable measure of common sense ; and, in spite of the modest level of his intellectual attainments, he proved himself, in comparison with his infamous predecessor, a

¹ Zetland, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

satisfactory ruler. He was neither a murderer, a spendthrift, nor a thief.”¹

Dissociating himself from adjectives and supplanting them by figures, Lord Zetland also writes :—

“ The road to ruin which Ismail Pasha had travelled had been a rapid one. For thirteen years he had added, on the average, a sum of £7,000,000 annually to the debt of Egypt, with the result that by the summer of 1876 the modest debt to which he had succeeded had risen from £3,293,000 to £91,000,000. Of this formidable sum, the £16,000,000 spent on the Suez Canal was the only portion for which assets of any value could be shown ; the balance, as Captain Baring was shortly to discover, had been squandered.”²

The Marquess of Zetland, in pillorying Ismail Pasha before the bar of history, has thus repeated, obviously in good faith, the indictments drawn up by Cromer and Colvin, Milner and Elgood, de Freycinet and Benedetti, and other writers too numerous to mention. The Concert of Europe has been attuned to but one note. Lord Milner may be said to have held the conductor’s *bâton* in this orchestra, for he wrote as early as 1892 :—

“ Ismail himself is as fine a type of the spendthrift as can well be found, whether in history or in fiction. No equally reckless prodigal ever possessed equally unlimited control of equally vast resources. He came to the throne when there seemed to be no limit to the potential wealth of Egypt. The whole land was his to do what he liked with. All the world was ready to lend him money to develop it. Moreover, Ismail combined in himself every quality, good as well as

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

bad, that goes to make the ideal squanderer. Luxurious, voluptuous, ambitious, fond of display, devoid of principle, he was at the same time full of the most magnificent schemes for the material improvement of the country. Over and above the millions and millions wasted in entertainments, in largesse, in sensuality, in the erection of numerous palaces—structurally as rotten as they are æsthetically abominable—he threw away yet other millions upon a vast scheme of agricultural development, started with inadequate knowledge at inordinate cost.”¹

This *leit-motif* in the orchestration of denunciation is compressed into the three epithets “spend-thrift”, “profligate”, and “squanderer”, into the three adjectives, “reckless,” “luxurious,” and “voluptuous,” and into one verb, “throw away,” which the distinguished British statesman piles upon the head of the Egyptian ruler whose name to him was anathema. The very next page of Lord Milner’s book stresses this note of vituperation, for it proclaims :—

“There is nothing in the financial history of any country, from the remotest ages to the present time, to equal this carnival of extravagance and oppression.”

Two pages further on the writer states :—

“Attempts have often been made to calculate what proportion of the debt contracted by Ismail was really spent for the good of the country. In view of the absolute chaos of the accounts previous to 1876, such calculations are wholly futile. One thing alone is certain : that the proportion was incredibly small. I doubt myself whether the portion of Ismail’s

¹ Milner, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

loans devoted to works of permanent utility, always excluding the Suez Canal, was equal to 10 per cent of the amount of debt which he contracted."

This means that the reader of *England in Egypt* is expected to infer that of the £89 million at which Lord Milner fixes the debt of Egypt in 1876, Ismail Pasha squandered £60,732,200. This figure is reached by subtracting from £89,000,000 (1) the debt which *England in Egypt* says that the spendthrift inherited from his uncle, £3,292,800; (2) the Suez Canal outlay of £16,075,000, the amount fixed by the Cave Report; and (3) the 10 per cent spent on works of permanent utility, £8,900,000. We thus have a little arithmetical problem as follows:

$$89,000,000 - (3,292,800 + 16,075,000 + 8,900,000) = 60,732,200.$$

As Ismail reigned for thirteen years, this amounts to the statement that slow horses, fast women, ostentatious display, and "wildcat" schemes are alleged to have cost the State an average of £4,671,708 per year. Lord Cromer's book came out sixteen years after Lord Milner's. The statistical indictment grew apace. The second author increased the total debt from £89,000,000 to £91,000,000. He also felt justified in affirming that:—

"Roughly speaking, it may be said that Ismail Pasha added, on an average, about £7,000,000 a year for thirteen years to the debt of Egypt. For all practical purposes it may be said that the whole of the borrowed money, except £16,000,000 spent on the Suez Canal, was squandered."¹

We have already seen that though the Marquess

¹ Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 5.

of Zetland issued his work twenty-four years after that of the Earl of Cromer, he accepts the latter's figures. It is thus reasonable to assume that the statistics revealing the extent of Ismail Pasha's financial work have now become stabilized. This being so, the time has come to forget for a while about these millions and to seek to find out exactly when the prudent farmer, who was bent on saving money in order to buy more land, became obsessed with the idea of borrowing large sums in order to squander them in all kinds of stupid ways.

Was there a sudden metamorphosis? Was the transition from providence to profligacy a gradual one? The student of history is entitled to know the truth.

Edwin de Leon, the American Consul-General, appears to have remained in and around Cairo for quite a number of years after he retired from his post. The climate of Egypt is most attractive; Cairo is, in many ways, what the Germans call a *Welstadt*. It is thus easy to understand why this official kept for years in close touch with the scenes where he claims to have played an important part.

Lord Milner's picture of a voluptuary who "wasted millions in entertainments, in largesse, in sensuality", conveys to the mind of the reader the vision of a profligate who spent his nights in mad carousals, his mornings in bed, and his afternoons in preparing for evenings of revelry and nights of debauch. Here is the description given of this moral degenerate by the American politician who knew him:—

"The Khedive is an immense worker, and as it is one of the taxes on absolute power that its head must know and supervise everything, even to the

minutest details, he is compelled to get up early and sit up late at the labour he loves, of directing the whole State machinery ; and these labours and cares are beginning to tell upon his health, as his personal appearance last winter attested. Yet the rest and vacation which private men may freely take, are impossible to crowned heads, especially in such critical circumstances as those which environ the Khedive. The labours which used to constitute his pleasure have become an imperious necessity now. While he goes abroad but little, so the pomp and circumstances of royalty surround the handsome but simple equipage which conveys the Khedive through the streets of his capital.”¹

The preface to this work is dated London, July, 1877. The testimony which it adduces, whatever may be its inherent worth, applies to the period when the Milner-Cromer-Zetland lenses throw upon the screen the mental picture of a debauchee surrounded by women, steeped in iniquity, and enamoured of display. McCoan, the English journalist who knew Ismail Pasha intimately, confirms the evidence of the American Consul-General. He sums up his estimate of the viceroy in one phrase : *l'état c'est le Khédive*.² He gives details which justify these words.

After having pointed out that councils and ministers were the mere agents of Ismail's personal will, he continues :—

“ From the negotiation of a treaty or a loan to the approval of a contract for coals or machinery, he is cognizant of every detail of public business, and nothing above the importance of mere departmental

¹ De Leon, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

² McCoan, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

routine is done without having first passed under his eye. . . . In a word, from Alexandria to Wady Halfa, beyond which he has delegated his authority to Gordon Pasha, His Highness not only reigns but governs.”¹

The man who, according to Lord Milner, was “luxurious and fond of display”, if McCoan’s word may be accepted, lived quite modestly, at all events for a prince who is said to have had a personal income, independent of his Civil List, of £160,000 per annum when he came to the throne. Here is the description which *Egypt as It Is* gives of Ismail’s abode :—

“The various Ministries are scattered within a radius of less than a mile from the palace of Abdine, where the Khedive now generally resides. . . . Abdine itself is a spacious but architecturally modest building, one wing of which is wholly devoted to Government offices and to the reception rooms in which His Highness gives occasional dinners and concerts. In this, too, is the small suite of apartments on the first floor, in one of which His Highness transacts business and receives his visitors, within call of his private secretary in an adjoining cabinet and of a couple of Arab *chasseurs* on the stair-landing outside. The chamber has no pretension whatever to splendour of furniture or decoration ; a thick Persian carpet, a damask-covered divan, a few chairs upholstered to match, with window-curtains of the same material, half a dozen crystal sconces round the arabesqued walls, and a small gilt table behind which the Prince himself sits, forming the *ensemble*.”²

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

² *Ibid.*, p. 91.

These statements are categorical. They were put into print when Ismail's star had begun to set. There is no apparent reason for doubting the good faith of the man who gives such circumstantial evidence. But, to a certain degree, he expresses an opinion. He does not confine himself to a bald statement of fact when he says that Abdine Palace "is architecturally a modest building", and when he adds that the reception chamber "has no pretension whatever to splendour of furniture or decoration".

An equally sincere visitor might perhaps have arrived at a diametrically opposite view of the same physical conditions. We, therefore, lay no undue emphasis on this part of McCoan's statement. We must, however, point out parenthetically that a prince who is said to have had a personal income of £160,000 a year might well have been magnificently housed when he became viceroy without being accused of extravagance. But, however this may be, the following lines cannot be brushed aside without accusing the man who wrote them of subjective untruthfulness :—

"Here [in this unpretentious chamber] His Highness takes his place every morning about eight o'clock, and receives first his sons—who are now respectively President of the Privy Council and Ministers of Finance, War, and Public Works—and, after them, such of the other Ministers and chief functionaries as may have occasion to consult him or have been summoned to an audience. Then, on till noon, follow receptions of the Consuls-General and such other foreigners as have, or have not, received consular introduction, and desire to see the great man

either to gratify a traveller's curiosity or to propose a contract. At noon—which is announced by gun-fire from the Citadel—His Highness retires for an hour to breakfast, and thence afterwards, except on the rare afternoons when he takes a couple of hours' drive in a modest two-horse brougham or barouche down the Shoobra or Abbassiah road, he is again at his post, giving more audiences, and transacting every sort of miscellaneous business till 7 p.m., when another hour is given to dinner, after which, if the day's work has been got through, he spends two or three hours on the balcony in the balmy Cairene night smoking and chatting affably with such of the Ministers or others who may have the *libre entrée* as may drop in, and then he goes to bed about eleven o'clock—or, if there be any business to be done, he again works at it from after dinner until midnight or even later."

Not content with relating what we must assume to be facts, unless McCoan's credibility be impeached, we also read :—

"During the twelve or fourteen hours thus given to positive work for certainly more than 300 days a year, there is, as has been said, hardly a detail of public business above the merest routine on which he is not consulted. He is, in fact, both sovereign and minister in one—seeing everything, knowing everything, and doing everything for himself." ¹

What de Leon and McCoan, two men who were thrown into frequent contact with the Viceroy, have written, demonstrates that the close-fisted Prince did

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

not cease to be a hard-working man when he ascended the throne. His predominant characteristics of industry, assiduity, and devotion to duty did not suddenly give way to the effete mode of life which marks the profligate, the voluptuary, the sensualist. And, if these two writers are to be believed, the old attributes—call them faults or virtues—continued to be manifest until Tewfik Pasha succeeded to the sceptre.

A confidential report in the archives of the American Legation at Cairo confirms the credibility of de Leon and McCoan. It is dated Alexandria, 15th September, 1873, and was thus written more than ten years after Ismail's accession. It bears the signature of the American Consul-General and is addressed to the Department of State, Washington. It may be objected that the man who drafted it was not a trained diplomat, but a Republican office-holder, who obtained his post as a reward for political services rendered to General Grant in the election of 1872. It would be folly to inquire into the merits of such criticism. Suffice it to say that if its author, when appointed, may perhaps have known but little of "protocols and peppermints", he was a keen psychologist, and had obtained political preferment largely because he was a good judge of human nature.

Writing to his chief a confidential report which was not intended for publication, and in which he could call a spade a spade, he said : " Ismail Pasha succeeded to the viceregal throne on the 18th of January, 1863, bringing to the discharge of his duties a remarkable knowledge of men and affairs, and an administrative ability but seldom witnessed among Oriental princes.

Since the hour of his succession he has devoted himself with untiring zeal and industry to the internal development of Egypt." ¹

Was Ismail, the Sovereign, such a Jekyll and Hyde that this official language might apply to the former and the words of Lord Milner to the latter? The answer is that a Dr. Jekyll who remains on duty from twelve to fourteen hours a day and 300 days a year for thirteen years has no time to play Mr. Hyde. If he did so through force of habit, senility would finally exact its toll of him. Not even an autocrat can play with nature. One of the first of a man's organs that senility attacks is his memory. Here is Moberly Bell's tribute to Ismail's memory. He did not like the Egyptian ruler, and, being a journalist, he had an expert's capacity for recognizing a good memory when he met one.

"His [Ismail's] memory was wonderful. On one occasion, about 1875, I disagreed with him as to some point in the original negotiations about the Suez Canal. On the spot he quoted to me about twenty lines of a not important document that he must have received fully ten years before. I took note of his quotation at the time, and subsequently found it to be verbatim." ²

Slavery begets laziness, and laziness voluptuousness. But Ismail was not lazy, and there is no irrefutable proof that he was voluptuous. It is thus in no sense surprising that in his first address to the Consular Corps he should have announced that he would

¹ *Official Correspondence, Consulate-General of the United States of America, 1869-1873*, p. 425, Archives American Legation, Cairo.

² *Khedives and Pashas*, p. 18.

abolish the *corvée*.¹ This does not mean that he then and there declared war on slavery. But the *corvée* or compulsory labour was so intimately akin to slavery that this declaration of policy gives an excellent insight into Ismail's character. It shows that he had learnt, as a farmer, what the *corvée* really meant, and was determined, as a sovereign, to put an end to it. A man who thought primarily of self-indulgence, and was bent on borrowing money in order to squander it, would hardly have given a thought to such a question.

But the new Viceroy did more than merely announce that he would abolish the *corvée*. "The expression *corvée* was so often repeated," wrote the French Consul-General to the Quai d'Orsay, "it established so vaguely the distinction between public services and those of the Government, in a word, the allusions to the canal works were so strong and so clear, that all eyes were turned towards me."²

This shows that the trained diplomatist sent out by Paris to help Ferdinand de Lesseps make Egypt into a French colony saw from Ismail Pasha's first public utterance that he was a fighter who scorned the line of least resistance. In other words, Napoleon's representative read between the lines of this inaugural address that Ismail was not seeking a life of ease, but was out to battle for the welfare of his people.

De Lesseps' biographers infer that England put Ismail Pasha up to this.³ What difference does it really make whether this was the case or not? Should

¹ Hallberg, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

² Confidential Report of the French Consul in Egypt to his Foreign Office, quoted in Hallberg, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

³ Bertrand et Ferrier, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

the Viceroy be blamed if he took proper advice? It should not be forgotten that he came to the throne on 18th January, 1863, just seventeen days after Lincoln's emancipation proclamation had taken effect in the United States. The American Civil War had riveted attention upon the slavery question. It gave wide publicity to the President's ukase. It is thus not impossible that Ismail followed his own inclinations, regardless of the fact that they harmonized with English sentiments and ran counter to those of France.

Napoleon III was, in those days, in the heyday of his glory. His Mexican fiasco was still in the womb of time. There is no reason to believe that the Viceroy would have done what he did had he not been convinced that it was the proper thing for him to do. At all events, it was a bold act on his part to antagonize France. Voluptuaries who seek a life of gilded ease are not inclined to do things that may interfere with the routine of their pleasures. The conviction is thus driven home that Ismail's first official contact with the consular corps accredited to him tends to refute the Milner indictment and the popular heresy that Ismail was "luxurious, voluptuous, ambitious, fond of display, devoid of principle".

But, be all this as it may, the death of Muhammad Said offered England a favourable opportunity for renewing and emphasizing her opposition to the Suez Canal. Sir Henry Bulwer (afterwards Lord Dalling and Bulwer), then British Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, led this attack. Constantinople was an admirable strategic point for carrying on this offensive, for Egypt was a vassal of Turkey, and the

Sultan had not issued a firman recognizing the legality of the de Lesseps concession. Ismail, as well as the British diplomat, caught the significance of this flaw in de Lesseps' title.

The best proof that Ismail, in opposing the *corvée*, was no mere sounding-board for giving publicity to England's wishes, is found in the fundamental divergence between the Viceroy's approach to the Suez Canal question and that of Downing Street. The Viceroy said to the French Consul-General before the end of January, 1863 :—

"I am more *canaliste* than M. de Lesseps, but I am also of a positive mind ; I believe that no work is so grand, none will be so productive for Egypt ; but at the present moment its bases are uncertain and badly defined. I will affirm them and then, surpassing my predecessor, I will push the works to their completion." ¹

It is easy to follow the working of Ismail's mind. He reasoned along these lines :—

"I believe in the Suez Canal, but I do not like this de Lesseps' concession. There is too much '*mon ami*' about it. My uncle signed these two deeds of 30th November, 1854, and 5th January, 1856, and that memorandum of 6th July, 1856, without reading them. He acted with his eyes closed. He sacrificed Egypt to his chum, Ferdinand de Lesseps. I am prepared to deal liberally with that charming gentleman, but I must think of my country first. This concession is illegal. My predecessor exceeded his powers. Until the Sultan ratifies the concession it is inchoate. I intend to fight it until it is adequately

¹ Hallberg, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

amended. When it is put into proper shape, I shall go full steam ahead."

It is just as simple a matter to observe Sir Henry Bulwer's chain of reasoning. It was something like this :—

"De Lesseps, a Frenchman, is seeking to take Neptune's trident from England. He is endeavouring to make France mistress of the seas. The Suez Canal is the trump card which the Quai d'Orsay is attempting to play. His concession has a flaw in it. I shall use this flaw as a means to prevent the coming into being of this attack upon British naval primacy."

The sum and substance of the situation, when Ismail spoke to the Consuls-General at that first reception, was that both he and Sir Henry Bulwer had, up to a certain point, the same interest in the attack which was made upon the *corvée*. The assault, so far as the British diplomatist was concerned, had but one objective ; the end of the proposed Suez Canal. The attack, as directed by the viceroy, envisaged the construction of the waterway, but a modification of the terms of the concession. The barrage of Ismail's fire was centred upon the *Corvée*. He was opposed to it on economic and humanitarian grounds.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIGHT ON THE *CORVÉE*

ISMAIL'S approach to the horrors of the *corvée* was directed by both his heart and his brain. Nothing will be said, for the moment, about this first aspect ; attention will be riveted upon the latter. We have already emphasized the fact that the viceroy was a great landowner and a practical agronomist. It was his common sense, born of his intimate contact with the soil, which told him that the *corvée*, as applied by de Lesseps in the Isthmus of Suez, was as stupid as it was immoral.

It will be recalled that de Lesseps had prudently refrained from inserting in either of his concessions a reference to the *corvée*. This obnoxious feature was incorporated in that more or less unknown decision of 20th July, 1856, which read :—

“The labourers employed in the digging of the canal shall be furnished by the Egyptian Government upon the requisition of the engineers of the company and as their requirements may necessitate.”

The canal officials called for the presence of a permanent force of from 20,000 to 25,000 men. These were replaced, at intervals of from one to three months, by fresh levies. This policy was necessary, if we may accept the testimony of Elbert E. Farman, the American Consul-General at Cairo, because “it was claimed that *corvée* labourers were cruelly

treated and died like flies".¹ It would serve no useful purpose to question the evidence upon which Judge Farman relies. Suffice it to say that by the employment of forced labour in the Isthmus 60,000 men were removed from productive enterprises.

This figure is based on the fact that while a minimum of 20,000 men were employed on the works at a given time, 20,000 were on their way to the Isthmus, and the remnants of the 20,000 who had finished their service were returning home. "Egyptian agriculture, it was said," to quote Professor Hallberg, "suffered disastrously."²

Attention has been riveted upon this distinct injury to Egypt's economic existence not only by the fact that the work upon the canal immobilized 60,000 men at a time, but also by the havoc which it played with the man-power of the country. Those who survived the ordeal were, for weeks and weeks, almost useless when they returned home. The Canal Company took the last pound of energy out of them. It only wanted new hands because it had exhausted the vitality of the old ones. This means that the number of men removed from productive enterprises probably far exceeded the 60,000 referred to by the distinguished American writer.

England had brought this question of *corvée* labour into the limelight before the death of Muhammad Said. It appears that the conscience of the British people had been aroused by what went on in the Isthmus. The roar of the British lion became so loud that the viceroy postponed, month after month, the supply of native labourers. This handicapped

¹ Farman, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

² Hallberg, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

work on the Canal. Questions were asked in the British Parliament. Replying on 16th May, 1862, to a suggestion that the British Government should intervene to bring about the abolition of forced labour in Egypt, Mr. Layard, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, made it clear that slavery, serfdom, and the *corvée* were local questions, and that England had no more right to intervene in Egypt to stop the *corvée* than she had to tell America that slavery must cease, or Russia that serfdom must be abolished.¹

Ismail, who was living in retirement when the attitude of Great Britain was thus defined, saw that while the English people might fume because the Canal was being built by *corvée* labour, the hands of the British Ministers were tied. And he knew that de Lesseps was wide awake enough to keep them tied. But he saw what the latter, perhaps, failed to grasp, namely, that the principle of international law which prevented England from interfering in Egypt to force Muhammad Said to abolish the *corvée*, estopped France from meddling in the Isthmus to hinder Ismail from doing so.

Ismail Pasha chose for his Foreign Minister a statesman of outstanding ability, Nubar Pasha, an Armenian Christian. This astute diplomatist received categorical assurances from Sir Henry Bulwer that "if the Viceroy prohibited forced labour and if France endeavoured to compel him to furnish it, England would support the Viceroy. In the House of Commons, Lord Palmerston declared that the Sultan and the Viceroy would receive the most energetic and active support of England".

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

Ismail and Palmerston were thus pulling in double harness. But, as has already been said, the Viceroy was not opposed to the canal. He was against the "*mon ami*" features of the Concession. He was also irreducibly hostile to the employment of forced labour. The British Foreign Secretary wanted to kill the whole thing. Inspired by this motive, but perfectly loyal to Ismail, as the move fitted in with their common tactics of the moment, Downing Street brought pressure to bear on the Sublime Porte. The result was that the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs wrote to the Viceroy, under date of 2nd April, 1863, protesting against the employment of forced labour on the Canal.¹

This letter protected Ismail from the wrath of Napoleon ; but he preferred not to obey it. He considered that it dealt with a question which concerned Egypt, and not Turkey. He therefore refrained from giving instructions to the Canal Company to suspend work on the waterway. He was determined to abate the *corvée* nuisance, but elected to do so in his own way.

There were other questions connected with the canal which also engrossed his attention. The second concession contemplated the building of a maritime canal, the Suez Canal properly so-called, and also of a fresh-water canal, derived from the Nile and connected with the maritime canal. One of the articles of this concession turned over to the *Compagnie Universelle*, for the construction of these canals and their adjuncts, all lands necessary for these purposes not belonging to private owners. Another clause set

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

forth that the Company was to receive the free use of all uncultivated lands not belonging to private owners, which could be irrigated by this fresh-water canal. This acreage was to be tax-free for ten years.

The opinion prevailed in Egypt, at the time of the death of Muhammad Said, that de Lesseps attached great importance to the title thus given to the desert lands to be irrigated by the fresh-water canal. It is true that his company was nominally a *compagnie universelle*, but it was French-inspired, French-owned, and French-managed. The foreign capital invested was practically exclusively French. Rumour had it in those days that Napoleon III intended to form an important French colony along the banks of this irrigation canal.¹ It also credited him with the intention of creating a French city at its Mediterranean mouth.

Whether the French Emperor really contemplated planting a French colony in the heart of Egypt is open to question. But, to quote McCoan,

“the political inexpediency of a foreign Company being allowed to hold, with almost sovereign rights, the wide belt of land along the Canal conceded by Said to Lesseps, and of its owning absolutely the fresh-water canal, was recognized by His Highness.”²

Egypt is what is known in international law as a capitulatory country. This implies that these holdings would have constituted a foreign enclave which would have extended into the very heart of the country. The wealth of the Canal Company, its political backing and the wide area of its properties would have made of it a veritable *imperium in imperio*.

¹ Farman, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

² McCoan, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

De Lesseps saw that he had a plum in these land grants. It should not be forgotten that he was an ardent Frenchman, an imperialist, and a militant patriot. His love for France does him credit. He also had a second fatherland. This subordinate *patrie* was *la Compagnie Universelle*. He fought for it, not to fill his own pockets with lucre, but because he was enamoured of his hobby. He took up the position that the maintenance of these land privileges was indispensable for the transformation of the desert into a fertile region. He declared that one of the important sources of revenue promised to the shareholders was the profit to be made out of these acres, and that he would prefer to see the affair "go on the rocks" rather than cede so important a privilege.¹

England, true to her working alliance with Ismail and alive to the justice of the position he had taken in refusing to jeopardize his sovereignty, supported the Viceroy. The Canal Company, and the French Government from the sidelines, saw that with London determined not to permit Egypt to be browbeaten, a deadlock appeared to be inevitable. Ismail realized the strength of his position. He hastened to send Nubar Pasha to Paris with instructions to get into touch with the Board of Directors of the Canal Company and to seek a basis for a settlement.

As soon as de Lesseps learnt of this development he telegraphed to his Directors not to see or treat with Nubar. The Egyptian Minister was not a man who could be brushed aside with impunity. He launched a counter-offensive. He believed in the basic fairness of French public opinion. He spoke

¹ Hallberg, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

fully and frankly to the Parisian press. He attacked the legality of the Company's concessions. He said some rather severe things about its manner of doing business. The Directors brought an action for libel against him in the Civil Tribunal of the Seine.¹ Nubar filed a reconventional demand. The Court held that Nubar, by attacking the legality of the Company's concession, had injured its credit. It also ruled that de Lesseps had no right to give publicity to the suit before it was brought to trial.

This decision was given on 28th February, 1864. It told both parties to the action that the time had come for them to settle their differences. Ismail still wanted to build the canal, provided the *corvée* was abolished and the concession hedged around with adequate safeguards. De Lesseps had learned that he had to descend from his high and lofty attitude. With England hostile and the Sultan recalcitrant, he reached the conclusion that prudence was the better part of valour.

It thus came about that within less than two months after the decision of the *Tribunal de la Seine*, de Lesseps for the Canal Company and Nubar for the Egyptian Government agreed upon a compromise. They decided to refer their differences to arbitration and that Napoleon III should act as the umpire. They also fixed the terms of reference.

It is hardly probable that the Emperor would have accepted this mandate had he not felt that England was perfectly willing for him to do so. It appears that on 9th January, 1864—a few weeks before the *Tribunal de la Seine* had given its judgement—Sir

¹ Bertrand et Ferrier, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

Henry Bulwer had informed Napoleon III that England did not object to the canal itself, but only to the manner in which it was being dug, and that if the *corvée* were abolished and the lands returned to the Egyptian Government there would be no further opposition.¹

But when Sir Henry Bulwer heard of the agreement to arbitrate and of the acceptance of the part of arbiter by Napoleon, he is said to have remarked :—

“How can the Emperor alienate any portion of Ottoman territory with the Viceroy’s consent or even at his request? The Ottoman Empire is guaranteed by five Powers. Would they like to see one sovereign charged with the right of disposing of a portion of territory, and that at so important a point as the one referred to?”²

Living up to the principle outlined in this question, Sir Henry Bulwer protested when he heard of the agreement. He took the position that it was invalid because it had not been sanctioned by the Sultan. But his ire had no practical results. The Emperor went on with the case. He announced his decision on 6th July, 1864. “It astonished the jurists of all Europe,” says Judge Farman, “and, had it not been of so serious a character, would have been regarded as a judicial curiosity.”³

We will not analyse this decree. Suffice it to say that de Lesseps’ biographers hold to the opinion that :—

“It was more favourable to the Egyptian Government than to the Canal Company, but, viewed from

¹ Hallberg, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

² *Ibid.*, p. 208.

³ Farman, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

the standpoint of its spirit and effect, it was a victory for the latter because it permitted it to go on with its work." ¹

Such language is cryptic enough to satisfy the most fastidious. But, after all, the decree should be allowed to speak for itself. Professor Hallberg thus summarizes it :—

"The regulation of 20th July, 1856, concerning the employment of native workers, was stated to be a contract containing reciprocal engagements to be executed by the Viceroy and the Company. For the annulment of this regulation, the Emperor awarded the Company an indemnity of thirty-eight million francs. The branch of the fresh-water Canal from Timsah to Suez was turned over to the Egyptian Government, but the Company was to have the enjoyment of all fresh-water canals until the completion of the maritime canal. The Company was compelled to give back to the Egyptian Government 60,000 hectares of land in the Isthmus, for which it was also indemnified. The total indemnity which the Egyptian Government was to pay the Company amounted to eighty-four million francs, payable over a period of fifteen years." ²

It is thus obvious that when Ismail ascended the viceregal throne, his first thoughts were not given to his comfort, the satisfaction of his senses, or ostentatious display. On the contrary, they concerned the betterment of the lot of the *fellah*, the safeguarding of Egyptian sovereignty, and the preserving for the people of his country of an important public utility,

¹ Bertrand et Ferrier, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

² Hallberg, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

the water supply of the region abutting on the Suez Canal. In thus listening to the dictates of statesmanship, the Viceroy had to steer between the Scylla of a France fighting for a concession which was far too friendly to de Lesseps to be equitable to Egypt, and the Charybdis of an England which wanted no Canal at all. He had, at the same time, to avoid the rock of Turkey which stood out midway between the two. The manner in which he escaped these three perils does honour to his adroitness.

If we were to accept what Milner and Cromer and Colvin and Zetland proclaim, we should be forced to admit that all this dexterity accomplished absolutely nothing. The author of *England in Egypt* writes :—

“The total amount sunk by the Egyptian Government in the Canal is given in Mr. Cave's Report of March, 1876, as £16,075,000 ; yet Egypt has no longer any share whatever in the vast profits of that undertaking.”¹

The word “sunk” is hardly a fair term to apply to the money which Muhammad Said and Ismail put into the Suez Canal enterprise. But we place no undue emphasis on this unfortunate phraseology. The point that cannot be allowed to pass unnoticed is the inference that it was Ismail who made away with Egypt's share in the vast profits of the Canal Company.

We readily admit that the Egyptian Government is no longer a shareholder in the *Compagnie Universelle*. This fact is incontestable. Disraeli bought out Ismail's stock in 1875. The true significance of this sale is discussed in a subsequent chapter.² But the salient fact has escaped Lord Milner that Egypt's sole

¹ Milner, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

² See Chapter XIV.

interest in the Suez Canal was not by any means represented by the block of stock for which the British Government paid £3,976,583. The contrary is demonstrated by the very terms of the concession of November 1854. It is there stipulated, in black and white, "that the Egyptian Government should receive 15 per cent of the annual net profits of the Company in addition to dividends from whatever shares it might decide to purchase."¹

Ismail did not sell to England this right of participation in the profits of the Suez Canal Company. He held on to this revenue-producing right. His share of stock did not bring him in a piastre, because all the dividends it earned reverted to the Company until 1894, as a result of one of the clauses of the award made by Napoleon III. But this 15 per cent share in the profits of the waterway meant hard cash to Ismail. When he was forced to abdicate, in June, 1879, the right of Egypt to a part of the luscious prospective profits of the Suez Canal was thus still assured to her.

It was in March, 1880, or nine months after the abdication of Ismail, that this invaluable asset was sold.² Tewfik Pasha was then on the throne. The Egyptian Government was supervised by what is known as the "Dual Control", which is but another way of saying that Paris and London dictated the policy of Cairo. It was a Frenchman, M. de Blignières, and an Englishman, Major Baring (afterwards Sir Evelyn Baring and later Lord Cromer), not the

¹ Hallberg, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

² *Annuaire Statistique du Gouvernement Egyptien*, 1930-31, Le Caire, 1932, p. 434.

sovereign who had been deposed, who were at the helm when this priceless possession was disposed of and a condition created by which, to quote Lord Milner,

"Egypt has no longer any share whatever in the vast profits of that undertaking" (the Suez Canal).

The author of *England in Egypt* does not exaggerate when he speaks of the "vast profits realized by the *Compagnie Universelle*". Ismail's successors sold Egypt's fifteen per cent interest in this gold mine for 22,000,000 francs or £880,000. The nominal purchaser was the *Crédit Foncier de France*. That Company at once created a subsidiary corporation which bears the lengthy name "*Société Civile pour le recouvrement des 15 % des produits nets de la Compagnie du Canal Maritime de Suez attribués au Gouvernement égyptien.*"

This joint stock company is a French institution¹ incorporated under the laws of France. As far as is known all its shareholders are French. The fates thus willed that if Ismail sold his unproductive Suez Canal shares to England, the "Dual Control", which looked after Egypt's interests immediately after Ismail's abdication, established an equilibrium between Paris and London, by selling to France Egypt's 15 per cent participation in the net profits of the Canal. This sale, plus the large French holdings in the 56 per cent of the stock not acquired by Disraeli, gave France and England in 1880, for all intents and purposes, an equal share in the net revenues of the Canal.

Interesting figures may be quoted to show that

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

Ismail turned over to his successor a valuable asset when he left this claim to this 15 per cent participation in the portfolio of the Egyptian Government. The *Société Civile* made money upon its investment from the very first day. The following staggering dividends were recently collected upon this 15 per cent:—

<i>Year</i>	<i>Amount in French francs</i>
1926	89,833,859
1927	106,496,338
1928	110,621,746
1930	107,746,479 ¹

In 1931 the world crisis was in full swing. Gilt-edged investments produced nothing, and the best of stocks passed their dividends. But the Suez Canal soared above such difficulties. During that twelve-month period of universal cataclysm this 15 per cent netted 91,849,014 francs. They were not gold francs, they were paper. But the pound sterling had collapsed in the autumn of 1931, and when dividends were paid in 1932 on money earned in 1931 there were about 90 francs to the pound. The *Société Civile* thus collected in 1932 approximately £1,020,544 upon its original outlay of £880,000. The statement may be hazarded that there are very few other investments in the world which showed, in 1932, such an astounding result.

When in 1892 Lord Milner published *England in Egypt* he may not have foreseen that 40 years later the Suez Canal would occupy an almost unique

¹ *Annuaire Statistique*, p. 434.

position among the financial institutions of the world. But when that classic was issued the *Société Civile* had already grown rich upon the dividends which Ismail had kept intact for his country. This fact escaped the distinguished author. Had his attention been directed to it, he would not have broadcast the accusation that when Ismail abdicated, Egypt had "no longer any share in the vast profits of" the Suez Canal. He would, it may be assumed, have devoted his literary talents and his powers of concentration to an attempt to demonstrate that it was the extravagances of the deposed sovereign that had so depleted the Egyptian Treasury that the "Dual Control" was reluctantly forced to dispose of Egypt's share in the prospective profits of the great waterway. The blunder made in March, 1880, was so stupendous that a serious effort would no doubt have been made to have it charged up to the exiled ruler.

This failure to direct such a barrage of fire against Ismail establishes the absolute good faith of Lord Milner. He, Sir Auckland Colvin, the Earl of Cromer, the Marquess of Zetland, and all the authors who call the Viceroy a profligate, were so obsessed with their hallucination that he was bent upon dissipating his heritage, that they completely overlooked the facts bearing upon the unfortunate sale made after his abdication. He had acted most prudently in disposing of his stock and in holding on to his 15 per cent participation in the profits. The proof of this statement is demonstrable.

When Ismail disposed of his shares in 1875 the future of the Suez Canal was open to discussion. The stock had been issued at 500 francs per share. The

average quotation of this stock during the first five years of the operations of the Canal was :—

<i>Year</i>	<i>Price in francs</i>
1870	272.86
1871	208.13
1872	355.13
1873	434.93
1874	422.19
1875	674.05 ¹

Disraeli's offer of £4,000,000 for 177,642 shares, or of £3,976,580 for the 176,602 shares actually delivered, meant £22 10s. or 562 francs per share, an amount well in excess of the price obtaining in 1874, and an excellent return in 1875 for so large a block. Ismail, who was unquestionably hard pressed for cash in November, 1875, reasoned along these lines :—

"I hold Suez stock worth, in round figures, £4,000,000. This is a heavy investment for a man who needs cash. These holdings cannot bring me in any revenue for a long number of years, even if the Canal turns out to be a good thing. The decision of Napoleon III has done me this injustice. But if the Canal becomes a success, my 15 per cent participation in the profits will make the venture most remunerative to me. I will 'play safe'. I will sell my stock at a satisfactory price and thus be 'on velvet'. Whatever happens I shall not lose anything. If good luck favours me, my 15 per cent share in the profits will satisfy me."

This reasoning, which Ismail may well have

¹ Hallberg, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

indulged in, was that of a prudent man who has "drawn a horse" in the Irish Sweepstake. He willingly sells a half-interest in his "horse", but he remains in the game to the extent of the unsold half. In the interval between the sale of this half-interest, or more accurately, between the sale of Ismail's Suez Canal stock and the disposal by Tewfik and the "Dual Control" of Egypt's participation in the profits of the *Compagnie Universelle*, the success of the waterway became assured. Here are the figures which bear out this statement :—

<i>Year</i>	<i>Price in francs of Suez Canal shares</i>
1875	674.05
1876	701.63
1877	677.87
1878	751.73
1879	724.40
1880	1,075.88 ¹

This increase in value was not due to the fact that England had replaced Egypt as the owner of the 176,602 shares sold in November, 1875. The movement of shipping through the Canal justified the quotations. The last annual statistics available when Ismail disposed of an interest in his "horse" were those of 1874. They show gross receipts of 24,859,383 francs. The gross income in 1880 ran up to 39,840,487 francs. The 1879 tolls had aggregated 29,686,060 francs.²

All this is but another way of bringing out the fact that when the "Dual Control" disposed of Egypt's

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

² *Ibid.*, p. 400.

remaining share in the future of the Suez Canal Company, the race had already been run and won. In 1875, Ismail had sold an interest in a "horse". In 1880, Tewfik sold an interest not in a "horse", but in a "winner". If it be deemed necessary to draw an indictment against somebody because Egypt no longer has a share in the winnings which had already been won in 1880 and are still being paid out with clock-like regularity, it is certainly not Ismail who should answer at the bar of history for this regrettable error of judgement.

If it be replied that it was debts contracted during Ismail's reign which forced Tewfik to sell his "winner", the answer is that if money was so badly needed in 1880 that cash had to be realized upon this 15 per cent participation in the profits of the Suez Canal Company, these assured handsome returns should have been used as collateral security for a loan. A group of French capitalists should not have been handed, upon a gold platter, the "winner's ticket" bequeathed to Egypt by Ismail. Somebody made a mistake. Who this "somebody" was may perhaps be open to question, but the fault cannot be fastened upon Ismail. The dates are there to exculpate him. And their significance is emphasized by the fact that the *Encyclopædia Britannica* affirms that at the time when this regrettable sale was made Lord Cromer was "practical dictator of the Dual Control". The crucial dates are brought out in these words :—

"He (Baring) was mainly responsible for the searching report, issued in 1878, of the commission of inquiry that had been instituted into the affairs

of the Khedive Ismail ; and when that able and unscrupulous Oriental had to submit to an enforced abdication in 1879, it was Major Baring who became the British Controller-General and practical dictator of the Dual Control. Had he remained in Egypt the whole course of Egypt's history might have been altered, but his services were deemed more necessary in India, and under Lord Ripon he became financial member of the Council in June, 1880."¹

As the sale to the *Crédit Foncier de France* was made in March, 1880, it is obvious not only that it was made after the enforced abdication of Ismail the Maligned, but also that it was carried out during the period of the practical dictatorship of a statesman who was in such intimate connection with the banking interests of England that he could readily have raised a loan upon this gilt-edged security had he realized the seriousness of the step which was taken under his overlordship.

But the fair test of Ismail's association with the Suez Canal, and the proper way of ascertaining whether his connection with it does or does not represent a loss to Egypt, is to forget, for the moment, all about pounds, shillings, and pence, and to place the discussion upon a higher plane. The reports of auditors have their allotted sphere, but moral assets cannot find a place in their soulless tabulations.

"The tremendous financial smash which marked the closing years of the reign of Ismail Pasha," says Viscount Milner, "was the result of a disregard, not only of every economic, but of every moral principle."²

¹ Ency. Brit., XIII edition, *verbo* Cromer, Evelyn Baring 1st Earl of, vol. vii, p. 484.

² Milner, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

This indictment brushes aside finance and presents a moral issue. In making up the Suez Canal balance-sheet, and viewing it solely from the standpoint of "moral principle", the outstanding factor is that Ismail refused to allow the waterway to be built by *corvée* labour. Napoleon fined him 38,000,000 francs, or £1,520,000, for his defence of the *fellah*. Assuredly Lord Milner's excoriation cannot apply to such conduct. It is to be regretted that his masterly treatise failed to take cognizance of this meritorious act. Had there been a "devil's advocate" present when the statesman drew up his charges, this virtuous deed would have been brought out in its proper light.

This same spokesman would also have called attention to the fact that the redemption of 60,000 hectares of Egyptian soil from the tentacles of the Canal Company octopus was no mean accomplishment. Ismail defended Egyptian sovereignty. He saved his country from having a French enclave penetrating across the desert and going to the very edge of the delta. It is difficult to estimate the present value of the soil thus redeemed from the foreigner and saved for the national domain. Napoleon III fixed this loss to the Canal Company at 30,000,000 francs, or £1,200,000. That sum cannot now be accepted in making up Ismail's "moral principle" balance-sheet. Some intangible moral value must also necessarily be ascribed to the service rendered by him in buttressing Egyptian sovereignty against the invasion of the foreigner. Such a contribution does not constitute a tangible asset which carries a message to the purse of a bondholder. But it should weigh heavily in the moral scale where Lord Milner says

that Ismail showed "a disregard not only of every economic but of every moral principle".

The same line of reasoning applies to the redemption of the fresh-water canal. De Lesseps foresaw that a populous city would spring up at the Mediterranean mouth of the Suez Canal. He visualized the growth of an important centre at the point on the banks of the Canal where Ismailia now stands. He envisaged rich fields of cotton, wheat, maize, and clover following the length of the fresh-water canal connecting the Nile and Lake Timsah. Ismail was also an optimist. His mind's eye conjured up the same vision. The Frenchman counted the francs that this fresh-water monopoly would pour into the coffers of the *Compagnie Universelle*. Hundreds of thousands of inhabitants settled in this Canal Company zone meant so many hundreds of thousands of francs of annual profit for his intellectual offspring. The Egyptian thought along the same lines.

Napoleon III considered that the withdrawal of this fresh-water monopoly entitled the Company to damages amounting to 6,000,000 francs, or £240,000. 16,000,000 francs were charged up against Ismail, but 10,000,000 francs represented the work already done.

It is extremely difficult to estimate the present worth of this franchise or concession. This Canal supplies Port Said, which has a population of 114,700 inhabitants, as well as Ismailia with its 31,600 and Suez with 41,100. It also irrigates the wide area lying between the Nile and Lake Timsah. In this district there are now 110,300 acres under the plough drawing water from this source. When this entire

expanse had practically no inhabitants, the concession was appraised at £240,000 plus the obligation to give the Company water free of charge until the opening of the maritime canal. This franchise, applicable as it is to a rich, populous, and growing community and supplying both urban needs and irrigation wants, is certainly worth many times this figure to-day. If we were seeking to draw up a balance-sheet of Ismail's financial association with the Suez Canal, it would be necessary to convert this unknown quantity into something concrete. But the only audit which is now being made is of those intangible assets known as moral factors. Viewing the matter from this angle, it is almost impossible to overestimate the service contributed by Ismail in securing this important public utility for Egypt.

One of the great problems of the United States is that of the control of public utilities. Franchises given out in the last century, when the great cities of to-day were towns, have now become heavy burdens to the taxpayers and gold-mines to the concessionnaires. The fight is one of the general welfare against vested rights. Those who understand the meaning of this great American problem cannot fail to pay homage to the statesmanship which forced de Lesseps to disgorge this sweet-water monopoly.

The corollary which flows from all this is that if Ismail's Suez Canal record be submitted to the acid test, the "financial" balance-sheet which applies to it should credit him :

(1) With £x for having acquired from the *Compagnie Universelle* 60,000 hectares of land now worth many

times the sum of £1,200,000 at which Napoleon III appraised them in 1864 ;

(2) With £7 for having redeemed the important water monopoly concession assessed by Napoleon III at £240,000 and at present worth a far greater amount ; and

(3) With £2 for having preserved for Egypt her 15 per cent participation in the profits of the Suez Canal Company which netted in that lean year, 1932, 91,849,014 francs, approximately £1,020,454, or more than 4 per cent on a capital of £25,000,000.

As these lines are written in April, 1933, land values are so low that it would be hazardous to attempt to fix the present selling price of the 60,000 hectares which passed to Egypt as a result of the ruling of Napoleon III. But during the fat years that followed the War it is quite probable that these hectares may have been worth approximately £12,000,000. If this figure be added :

(1) To the £25,000,000 which the 15 per cent participation in the profits of the Suez Canal is now worth even in the hardest of hard times, and

(2) To the value of the water monopoly, a total is reached which would have absorbed, in 1928, a very considerable proportion of the debt of £89,000,000 which Lord Milner charges up against Ismail's reign ; and which even to-day would account for more than a quarter of that sum.

If, on the other hand, this " financial " balance-sheet be thrust aside and the question be envisaged solely from the point of view of these moral principles stressed in *England in Egypt*, Ismail should be credited, in a purely " moral principle " balance-sheet :

(1) With having driven *corvée* or forced labour off the Canal ;

(2) With having protected the sovereignty of Egyptian soil from the encroachment of a powerful foreign colony ; and

(3) With having safeguarded the public utilities of Egypt by refusing to allow the Canal Company to enjoy a monopoly of what is now generally looked upon as a proper attribute of the State.

CHAPTER V

THE WAR ON SLAVERY

ISMAIL's attitude towards the *corvée* was not a fleeting fancy ; it was a deliberate act. It was the first manifestation of a well-considered policy to which he adhered to the end of his reign. It explains the friendship which existed between him and Sir Samuel Baker ; it makes it clear why Gordon admired him ; it brings out why Malcolm and McKillop were so devoted to him.

Muhammad Said was still viceroy of Egypt when Sir (then Mr.) Samuel Baker began his expedition to discover the sources of the Nile. He had hoped to meet Speke and Grant and share their glory with them. The fates decreed that they should reach Victoria Nyanza before he crossed their paths. But Baker continued undaunted at his self-imposed task. His tenacity and courage were rewarded when, on 14th March, 1864, his eyes beheld Albert Nyanza. It was not until October, 1865, that Baker returned to England. London welcomed him as a conquering hero. He merited the hosannas of praise with which he was greeted, for not only had he played a prominent part in solving one of the great mysteries of the Unknown Continent, but he had also fought slavery at its fountain-head. He was, in a word, acclaimed as a great explorer and as a great champion of human liberty.

At the time when Baker returned from his explorations, Ismail had been two years on the throne. While desiring to extend his territories, the Viceroy had declared his determination to suppress the slave trade. He did not confine himself to issuing proclamations, which mean nothing. He established an Egyptian army camp of 1,000 men at Fashoda in the Shilluk country.¹ He made elaborate preparations to stamp out slave *razzias*. But his active mind soon saw that his representatives, whether at Khartum or Fashoda, could not be depended upon to fight slave-hunters. They were blind, and had itching palms.

Baker, who had been knighted in 1866, visited Egypt in 1869, in order to assist in making arrangements for the sojourn of the Prince and Princess of Wales. Ismail became impressed with the explorer's vigorous personality. He felt that Baker was the very man he needed to fight slavery in its stronghold. He considered that if he had such a man to lead the war on slave-hunters, their *razzias* would cease, and he determined to induce this man of action to enter his service.

It was at a *bal costumé* given at Ismailia by de Lesseps that the Viceroy broached to the Prince of Wales his idea of nominating Baker to take command of an expedition for the suppression of the slave trade on the White Nile and for the establishment of order in the Sudan.² The Prince heartily approved of the suggestion. So did Baker, who "hurried home to make preparation for his new expedition, the official

¹ *The War in Egypt and the Sudan*, by Thomas Archer, London (Blackie & Son), 1885, vol. i, p. 121.

² *Sir Samuel Baker, A Memoir*, by J. Douglas Murray and A. Silva White, London (Macmillan & Company), 1895, p. 132.

character and the nature of which made it", say his authorized biographers, "an undertaking of considerable importance."¹

Baker grasped the significance of Ismail's act. He declared that

"the employment of an European to overthrow the slave trade in deference to the opinion of the civilized world, was a direct challenge and attack upon the assumed rights and necessities of his own subjects. The magnitude of the operation could not be understood by the general public in Europe. Every household in Upper Egypt and in the Delta was dependent upon slave service ; the fields in the Sudan were cultivated by slaves ; the women in the harims of both rich and middle class were attended by slaves ; the poorer woman's ambition was to possess a slave ; in fact, Egyptian society without slaves would be like a carriage devoid of wheels—it could not proceed."

The firman which Baker received from Ismail may well be quoted. It shows that he placed himself entirely in the hands of the explorer. His good faith cannot be successfully attacked, for his agent's field of operations was several thousand miles south of Cairo. In the territory over which he was appointed, the Englishman was lord and master. His firman reads :

"We, Ismail, Khedive of Egypt, considering the savage condition of the tribes which inhabit the Nile Basin ;

"Considering that neither government, nor laws, nor security exist in those countries ;

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

"Considering that humanity requires the suppression of the slave-hunters who occupy those countries in great numbers ;

"Considering that the establishment of legitimate commerce throughout those countries will be a great stride towards future civilization, and will result in the opening to steam navigation of the great Equatorial lakes of Central Africa, and in establishing a permanent government. . . . We have decreed and now decree as follows :—

"An expedition is organized :

"(1) to submit to our authority the countries situated to the south of Gondokoro ;

"(2) to suppress the slave trade ;

"(3) to introduce a system of regular commerce ;

"(4) to open to navigation the great lakes of the Equator, and

"(5) to establish a chain of military stations and commercial depots, distant at intervals of three days' march, throughout Central Africa. Gondokoro is the base of operations.

"The supreme command of this expedition is conferred upon Sir Samuel Baker for four years beginning 1st April, 1869. We also confer upon him the most absolute and supreme power, even that of death, over all those who may compose the expedition.

"We confer upon him the same absolute and supreme authority over all those countries belonging to the Nile Basin south of Gondokoro." ¹

This firman speaks not only of the suppression of

¹ *Ismailia, A Narrative of the Expedition to Central Africa for the Suppression of the Slave Trade organised by Ismail, Khedive of Egypt*, by Sir Samuel W. Baker, London (Macmillan & Co.), 1874, vol. i, p. 6.

the slave trade, but also of "the establishment of legitimate commerce" and of the opening up to navigation of "the great lakes of the Equator". All three of these ends are commendable. Expenses incurred in forwarding any one of them could be set on the right side of the ledger in making up that "moral principle" balance-sheet stressed by Viscount Milner. Sums spent in carrying out these objects do not strike us as being money squandered in the sense that the Earl of Cromer must be presumed to have used that pejorative word when he wrote that "for all practical purposes it may be said that the whole of the borrowed money, except the £16,000,000 spent on the Suez Canal, was squandered."¹

But, since Ismail has been pictured as an incorrigibly vain man who was fond of display, it may perhaps be inferred that it was inordinate megalomania which caused him to undertake this expedition to Central Africa. Colvin, Milner, Cromer, and Zetland, who mean to be fair but have had their perspective blurred by too intense a concentration upon the deluge which followed Ismail's abdication to get down to fundamentals, depend, in the last analysis, very largely upon what is known as the Cave Report to justify their devastating charges. It is, therefore, of interest to read in this official paper that :—

"The occupation of Darfour and the expedition to the Equatorial lakes are not, commercially speaking, successful. The Khedive has engaged to some extent in these enterprises for the sake of the suppression of the Slave Trade, and the Abyssinian war was almost forced upon him. It is probable that he will retire

¹ Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 11.

as soon as possible from Abyssinia and the Equator. Extension of territory and of trade may have attractions for the Khedive, but he is not dazzled by the barren glory of war.”¹

Auditors, as a rule, are as cold as fishes. The human equation means nothing to them. They have but one mandate ; it is a mission of heartless scrutiny. Tangible assets and liabilities, real or potential, are the only things that interest them. This statement that Ismail “is not dazzled by the barren glory of war”, thus takes on a significance that merits attention. It does so all the more because the slave trade could not have been fought successfully if the Viceroy had not seen that the war on slave *razzias*, the establishment of legitimate commerce, and the opening up to navigation of the great lakes of the Equator, had to move along simultaneously.

There was nothing of the auditor about Charles George Gordon, the martyr of Khartum. He is the last person in the world whom we would be tempted to look upon as subordinating humanity to commerce. And yet this man of mystery wrote to his sister before he left for the Sudan on his first mission :—

“God has allowed slavery to go on for so many years ; born in the people, it needs more than an expedition to eradicate it ; open out the country and it will fall of itself.”²

A few days later, Gordon again wrote :—

“I believe, if the Sudan was settled the Khedive would prevent the slave trade ; but he does not see

¹ McCoan, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

² *Letters of General Gordon to his Sister, M. A. Gordon*, London (Macmillan and Co.), 1888, p. 90.

his way clear to do so till he can move about the country. My ideas are to open it out by getting the steamers on the lakes, by which time I should know the promoters of the slave trade and could ask the Khedive to seize them.”¹

Few men more practical than Sir Samuel Baker have ever lived. He had a most remarkable personality. The universality of his interests is staggering. Thoroughness was his watchword. He and Gordon were, in many ways, the very antithesis of each other. But Baker, in summing up Ismail's firman, shows that he too looked upon the suppression of the slave trade as being the Viceroy's primary objective. His exact words are :—

“ It is thus that the Khedive determined, at the risk of his popularity among his own subjects, to strike a direct blow at the slave-trade in its distant nest. To insure the fulfilment of this difficult enterprise, he selected an Englishman, armed with a despotic power such as had never been entrusted by a Muhammedan to a Christian. The slave trade was to be suppressed ; legitimate commerce was to be introduced, and protection was to be afforded to the natives by the establishment of a government.”²

It is really, however, of secondary importance whether Baker and Gordon were right or wrong in taking the view that Ismail's outstanding concern in penetrating into Central Africa was to suppress the slave trade. Money spent in attempting to extend legitimate commerce and in seeking to afford to the natives of Central Africa the protection of governmental authority represents an item which,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

² Baker, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 7.

it would seem, should be entered on the right side of the Milner "moral principle" balance-sheet.

The author of *England in Egypt* may, nevertheless, be technically correct in the position that he has assumed. We say this because, while it was Ismail's boast that during his reign a naked nubile woman of resplendent beauty, her neck and arms covered with diamonds, could walk unattended, in broad daylight, by the public road from Alexandria to the Equator without the loss of her virginity or her jewels, within less than six years after the Viceroy's abdication Gordon died at Khartum, and all the vast territory which Ismail had redeemed from barbarism was lost to civilization. Sir Samuel Baker brought out this same fact when he wrote :—

"In the reign of Ismail there was a feeling of general security throughout his dominions : from Alexandria to Khartum a Christian stranger was as safe or safer than a Londoner in Hyde Park after dark. . . . The Sudan is now [about 1884] in widespread revolt." ¹

Even if such considerations as these may perhaps tend to warrant the blotting out from the "moral principle" balance-sheet of the money spent by Ismail in fighting slavery in the Sudan and in opening up Central Africa to civilization, the inquiring mind would like to know exactly what all this effort really cost in gold. The exact figures are not available, "in view," as Lord Milner puts it, "of the absolute chaos of accounts previous to 1876." ² All that can

¹ *Sir Samuel Baker, A Memoir*, p. 285.

² See, however, Chapter IX, which, quoting official figures, puts this expense at £E. 474,063.

be done is to visualize the general conditions with which Ismail had to cope and to enter another x in the growing column of unknown quantities.

In order to estimate what this x may possibly amount to, it is well to recall that Sir Samuel Baker first visited the equatorial regions of Central Africa when Muhammad Said was still in power. His graphic pages, which speak of the discovery of Albert Nyanza, tell the tale of how the slave-hunters then dominated the basin of the White Nile. His work was published before he came under the influence of Ismail's magnetic personality. It is based upon a journal written in 1861 and the three or four following years. He records that :—

“ Africa can never be raised to any scale approaching to civilization until the slave trade shall be totally suppressed. The first step necessary to the improvement of the savage tribes of the White Nile is the annihilation of the slave trade ; until this be effected, no legitimate commerce can be established ; neither is there an opening for missionary enterprise ;—the country is sealed and closed against all improvement.

“ Nothing would be easier than to suppress this infamous traffic, were the European Powers in earnest. Egypt is in favour of slavery. I have never seen a Government official who did not in argument uphold slavery as an institution absolutely necessary to Egypt—thus any demonstration made against the slave trade by the Government of that country will be simply a *pro forma* movement to blind the European Powers. Their eyes thus closed, and the question shelved, the trade will resume its channel.

“Were the reports of European Consuls supported by their respective Governments, and were the Consuls themselves empowered to seize vessels laden with slaves, and to liberate gangs of slaves when upon a land journey, that abominable traffic could not exist. The hands of the European Consuls are tied, and jealousies interwoven with the Turkish question act as a bar to united action on the part of Europe ; no Power will be the first to disturb the muddy pool.”¹

This quotation shows that when Ismail took over the sceptre from his uncle in 1863, not only were the Egyptian officials friendly to the slave-hunters, but Europe viewed these *razzias* with placid equanimity. So did those who represented the United States in and around Khartum. President Lincoln was then throwing hundreds of thousands of men into the States of the Southern Confederacy to give vitality to his Emancipation proclamation, which became legally operative on January 1, 1863. “But,” writes Baker,

“upon my arrival at Gondokoro I was looked upon as a spy sent by the British Government. Whenever I approached the encampments of the various traders I heard the clanking of fetters before I reached the station, as the slaves were being quickly driven into hiding places to avoid inspection. They were chained by two rings secured around the ankles and connected by three or four links. One of these traders was a Copt, the father of the American Consul at Khartum ; and, to my surprise, I saw the vessel

¹ *The Albert Nyanza, Great Basin of the Nile and explorations of the Nile Sources*, by Samuel White Baker, London (Macmillan & Co.), vol. ii, p. 311.

full of brigands arrive at Gondokoro, with the American flag at the mast-head.”¹

Thus secured from interference by the Consuls of Europe and America and backed up in their nefarious calling by the subordinates of Muhammad Said, these slave-hunters grew insolent, rich, and powerful. Baker tells how they carried on their operations. He begins :—

“Without the White Nile trade Khartum would almost cease to exist ; and that trade is kidnapping and murder. The character of the Khartumer needs no further comment. The amount of ivory brought down from the White Nile is a mere bagatelle as an export, the annual value being about £40,000.”

After having struck this note the explorer adds :—

“There are two classes of White Nile traders, one possessing capital, the other being penniless adventurers ; the same system of operations is pursued by both, but that of the former will be evident from the description of the latter.

“A man without means forms an expedition, and borrows money for this purpose at 100 per cent after this fashion. He agrees to pay the lender in ivory at one-half its market value. Having obtained the required sum, he hires several vessels and engages from 100 to 300 men, composed of Arabs and runaway villains from distant countries, who have found an asylum from justice in the obscurity of Khartum. He purchases guns and large quantities of ammunition for his men, together with a few hundred pounds of glass beads. The piratical expedition being complete, he pays his men five

¹ Baker, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 93.

months' wages in advance at the rate of nine shillings per month and agrees to give them sixteen shillings per month for any period exceeding the five months advanced."

He then goes on to tell the story of how these bandits operated :—

"The vessels sail about December," he writes, "and on arrival at the desired locality, the party disembark and proceed into the interior, until they arrive at the village of some negro chief, with whom they have established an intimacy. Charmed with his new friends, the power of whose weapons he acknowledges, the negro chief does not neglect the opportunity of seeking their alliance to attack a hostile neighbour. Marching throughout the night, guided by their negro hosts, they bivouac within an hour's march of the unsuspecting village, doomed to an attack about half an hour before break of day. The time arrives, and, quietly surrounding the village while its occupants are still sleeping, they fire the grass huts in all directions, and pour volleys of musketry through the flaming thatch. Panic-stricken, the unfortunate victims rush from their burning dwellings and the men are shot down like pheasants in a battue, while the women and children, bewildered in the danger and confusion, are kidnapped and secured. The herds of cattle, still within their Kraal or Zareeba, are easily disposed of, and are driven off, with great rejoicing, as the prize of victory. The women and children are then fastened together and are eventually brought to a slave market." ¹

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 17.

The slave-hunters and traders who thus penetrated into the interior formed companies of brigands in the pay of various merchants of Khartum. The largest of these tradesmen had about 2,500 Arabs in his employ, scattered as pirates or brigands in Central Africa. They were armed with muskets and were organized in a rude military fashion. They were divided into companies, and were officered, in many cases, by soldiers who had deserted from their regiments in Egypt or the Sudan.

Baker estimates that about 15,000 Egyptians—not to speak of Sudanese—were engaged in the so-called “ivory trade” of the White Nile. Each trader had his special district, where, by a division of his force in a chain of stations, each representing about 300 men, he could exercise a right of possession over a wide zone. In this manner enormous tracts of country were occupied by armed bands from Khartum. They were thus able to make alliances with the natives to attack and destroy their neighbours, and carry off women and children, together with vast herds of sheep and cattle, as has already been explained.¹

This means that the slavers represented a military power of great strength, well organized and powerfully entrenched. When Ismail determined to fight them, he declared war against an adversary which had almost every strategic advantage over him. He and Baker knew this. They believed in one another. Never once during the four years that he remained in the viceregal service did the Englishman have occasion to doubt, or did he in fact doubt, the absolute

¹ *Ismailia*, vol. i, p. 3.

sincerity of the support given him by the sovereign whom he so faithfully served. He was not a courtier. It was because he meant exactly what he said that he wrote from Central Africa to Ismail on 28th December, 1870 :—

“*Monseigneur,*

“I take this occasion to thank Your Highness for the communication with which Your Highness honoured me on 19th September. I accept with pride the expressions of esteem to which Your Highness has given expression. Believe me, *Monseigneur*, that the approval of Your Highness will always be my greatest recompense for the fatigues inseparable from my mission.”¹

Baker obviously needed more than moral support to carry out his mission. The loyalty of the Viceroy was essential, but not sufficient. The man on the spot had to have an elaborate equipment, man-power, and an unlimited letter of credit. It requires munitions, troops, and money to win wars. Baker was alive to the vastness of his task, and he went about matters most systematically.

It appears that he drafted the contract which defines his relations with the Viceroy. We say this because in the Royal Egyptian Archives at Cairo there is a *note-verbale* dated 15th April, 1869, which reads :—

“Mr. Rogers has the honour to submit herewith to His Excellency, Chérif Pasha, a translation of the contract of Sir Samuel Baker, and he prays His Excellency to advise him as soon as His Highness, the Viceroy, shall have accepted it, because Sir Samuel

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, file no. 72/1.

Baker is awaiting in England advice of the acceptance of His Highness."

The document thus prepared by the explorer outlines the letter and spirit of the firman which has already been quoted. One of its clauses may well be reproduced in the French text which Ismail read and accepted. It emphasizes the wide mandate which he gave Baker. It reads :—

*"Son Altesse consent à céder au susdit Sir Samuel W. Baker une carte blanche pour préparer et obtenir tout ce qu'il croira nécessaire à l'expédition."*¹

This term "*carte blanche*" justified Baker in writing :—

"Having received full powers from the Khedive I gave orders for the following vessels to be built by Messrs. Samuda Brothers :

"No. 1. A paddle steamer of 251 tons, 32 horse-power.

"No. 2. A twin screw high-pressure steamer of 20 horse-power, 108 tons.

"No. 3. A twin high-pressure steamer of 10 horse-power, 38 tons.

"Nos. 4 and 5. Two steel lifeboats, each 30 feet by 9. 10 tons each.

"These vessels were fitted with engines of the best construction by Messrs. Penn & Company and were to be carried across the Nubian desert in plates and sections. In addition to the steamers were steam saw mills, with a boiler that weighed 8 cwt. in one piece—all of which would have to be transported by camels for several hundred miles across the Nubian desert, and by boats and camels alternately from

¹ *Ibid.*, file no. 72/1.

Alexandria to Gondokoro, a distance of about three thousand miles.”¹

It is a great pity that no records are available to tell what this naval equipment cost. The fact that it had to be delivered at so great a distance and to be transported by sea-going steamers, river boat and camel back, obviously brought the amount to fancy figures. Baker’s *Ismailia*, on the other hand, tells what was spent on incidentals. He says :—

“ Before I left England I personally selected every article that was necessary for the expedition ; thus an expenditure of about £9,000 was sufficient for the purchase of the almost innumerable items that formed the outfit of the enterprise. This included an admirable selection of Manchester goods . . . and tools of all kinds.”²

The sum does not appear to have covered the medicine and drugs. It obviously does not cover the food supply of the troops. It has nothing to do with the purchase of arms and ammunition. It refers to the odds and ends which the expedition needed to complete its outfit.

In addition to the vessels ordered in London, Baker seems to have either bought, had built, or requisitioned in Egypt six steamers from 40 to 80 horse-power, as well as fifteen sloops and fifteen dahabiahs. He also made arrangements to take over at Khartum twenty-five additional vessels and three steamers.³ His military arrangements comprised 1,654 troops, including a corps of 200 irregular cavalry and two batteries of artillery.⁴

¹ *Ismailia*, vol. i, p. 92.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 16.

Nothing has been found which bears upon the cost of all these vessels of various categories obtained in Egypt and at Khartum. The sum budgeted for artillery, arms, and munitions is unknown. No information is available in regard to the salaries paid to the various Englishmen who served under Baker. All that is known is that his contract fixed his salary at £10,000 per annum and that all his expenses were to be borne by the Egyptian Government. A liberal allowance was provided for his family should he die while on the expedition.¹ It is fair to assume that what he calls "the English party" was treated with proportionate liberality. It consisted, besides Lady Baker, of Lieutenant Julian Baker, R.N.; Mr. Edwin Higginbotham, civil engineer; Mr. Wood, secretary; Dr. Joseph Gedge, physician; Mr. Marcapoulo, chief storekeeper and interpreter; Mr. McWilliam, chief engineer of steamers; Mr. Jarvis, chief shipwright; together with Messrs. Whitfield, Samson, Hetchman, and Ramsall, shipwrights, boilermakers, etc., and two servants.²

Sir Samuel Baker was a gentleman. Inasmuch as he received what appears to have been a liberal salary, it is reasonable to suppose that he exacted generous treatment for his subordinates. The result of such adequate but not exaggerated compensation for these Englishmen was obviously an annual pay-list of some size. Whatever it was is of no practical importance in establishing the financial sheet of Ismail's reign, because the Sudan was abandoned by Egypt in 1885. The Viceroy had then been an exile for over five years.

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, file no. 72/1.

² *Ismailia*, vol. i, p. 12.

But it does seem that this unknown quantity should weigh heavily in Ismail's "moral principle" balance-sheet. And we insist on this to a certain extent, because in the contemporary publication known as "*Notes sur le Budget Egyptien 1873-1874*" it is recorded that the total cost of Sir Samuel Baker's expedition amounted to £474,063. It is, unfortunately, not set forth in these "notes" what items are included in this figure.

CHAPTER VI

THE BAKER EXPEDITION

THE story of Baker's advance into Central Africa reads like an epic. It has for its heroes the two Bakers, uncle and nephew, Abd-el-Kader, the Muslim, Mansur, the Copt, and every man of that élite corps known to immortality as the "Forty Thieves". It has its heroine in the incomparable Lady Baker, as beautiful as she was brave, clinging like ivy to her husband and shooting as straight as an American roughrider. It has its martyr in Higginbotham, its villains in Ahmed Agad, Abu Saud, and Kabba Rega, and its brigands become saints in Wat-el-Mek, Alloron, and Ferritch Ajoke. It abounds in unexpected incidents, narrow escapes, and dramatic climaxes. It tells how hippopotamuses charged at steel boats and overturned sloops, how crocodiles lay in wait for their human victims and captured them, and how white ants issued from the ground in the winged state and were pursued by myriads of white storks. The enthralling interest of the story is multiplied a hundred-fold by the fact that this Aeneas requires no Virgil, for Baker writes his own epic.

After countless difficulties, which were but a prelude to others, he formally annexed to Egypt, on 26th May, 1871, the heart of Central Africa. He had no surveyors with him, and no maps to define the extent of the territory won for Ismail as an incident in that

sovereign's war on slavery. He thus described the ceremony :—

“ On 26th May, 1871, all was in order. A flag-staff, about eighty feet high, had been neatly erected by Lieutenant Baker on the highest point of land overlooking the river. Every small bush had been cleared away, and the position in the centre of an open park-like country would have formed an admirable race-course. The troops, having had two days' rest to wash their clothes and burnish up arms and accoutrements, marched from the station at Gondokoro at 6 a.m. I had 1,200 men on the ground, including ten mountain rifled guns throwing $8\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. shell. . . .

“ Having ridden along the line and halted beneath the flag, the troops formed three sides of a square and the flag-staff in the centre. The fourth side, facing the river, was then occupied by the artillery with ten guns. The formality of reading the official proclamation, describing the annexation of the country to Egypt in the name of the Khedive, then took place at the foot of the flag-staff. At the termination of the last sentence, the Ottoman flag was quickly run up by the halyards and fluttered in the strong breeze at the mast-head. The officers, with drawn swords, saluted the flag, the troops presented arms, and the batteries of artillery fired a royal salute.”¹

A report submitted by Baker to the Viceroy, dated Khartum, 5th July, 1873, confirms the passage just quoted from *Ismailia*. The opening paragraph of this official document runs :—

“ Monseigneur,

“ I have the honour to inform Your Highness that

¹ *Ismailia*, vol. i, p. 248.

notwithstanding the small size of the military force at my disposal, I have annexed a great part of Central Africa, and that the territory of Your Highness thus extends as far as the Equator. I have left the country in good order and all the officers and men are in good health." ¹

During the long months when Baker was accomplishing this result by making the impossible become the common-place, Ismail took an active and intelligent interest in the campaign. An extract from a letter he wrote to Baker, dated February, 1872, makes this perfectly clear :—

"You have now reached a country which is both beautiful and fertile. You are surrounded by a people who have been made mistrustful and hostile by the past conduct of the slave-hunters, conduct to which your mission has put a stop. But your communications with Khartum are long and difficult. It would, therefore, appear to me to be imprudent for you to advance and leave behind you tribes which have not been pacified and brought to have confidence in us. Stop at Gondokoro ; fortify your position, begin your work and use every effort to make it known to the tribal chiefs."

Not content with general terms, Ismail continued :—

"Monopolize trade as you have suggested. I say this not because I believe in a monopoly, but because I find it justified in this instance. It is necessary in order to do away with those traffickers who make use of slaves as a medium of exchange. But make a large and liberal use of your monopoly, and you will, in

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, file no. 72/1.

a short while, get the natives to replace an illegitimate interest by a legitimate one."

The next paragraphs pass on to another subject. They also merit reproduction.

"I want to know what articles of barter most interest the natives. You have Higginbotham with you. I do not think that one engineer is enough. I shall send you a second one to serve under him. Consider how you can best facilitate your communications with Khartum. You have control of the Baris : be just to them. They will acquire confidence in you and learn what you have come to teach them.

"All this material and moral work will take time, I know. But when you have brought it to fruition, be assured that without moving out of Gondokoro you will have opened for yourself an easy route to the lakes, even if they be more than a hundred leagues away.

"I have sketched the broad outlines of the conduct which I desire you to follow, but I leave it to your intelligence to find the ways and means of attaining this end. In a word, do not advance, but teach, colonize, make the tribes your friends, and when this is accomplished, advance."¹

There is a note of real statesmanship and broad humanitarianism running through this letter which does not harmonize with Lord Zetland's reference to a "villainous reign".² It is just such a spirit as this that made Baker and Gordon, two English gentlemen who would not have given their friendship and confidence to a bad man, believe in Ismail and defend him. They knew that he meant just what he said in

¹ *Ibid.*, file no. 72/1.

² Zetland, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

this dispatch. And it was because he did, and because it took money, and plenty of it, to carry out such a programme, that the financiers of Europe appear to have interfered and to have insisted that he should reduce this heavy outlay.¹

This attitude of the bill-brokers is readily understood. What interested them was the payment of coupons, not the suppression of the slave trade. The opening-up of Central Africa to civilization meant nothing to them unless they were to have a finger in the pie. Ismail was reluctant to part with Baker, and did his best to make the Briton cut down expenses as much as was consistent with the proper conduct of the expedition. It will be recalled that the explorer had been given "*carte blanche*" to spend as much money as his requirements might necessitate. It would appear from an undated letter addressed to Baker, that Ismail expected that the heavy outlay would be reduced after the work had got well under way. At all events, the Viceroy wrote :—

"My dear Sir Samuel,

"At the time of your departure for the Sudan, you gave me to understand that while your expenses would be somewhat high during the first year, they would afterwards be very considerably reduced year by year, and that you even foresaw the realization of great profits.

"From the statement which reaches me annually from these parts, I note that these expenses are far from having been reduced, and that they are on the same basis as they were the first years."

¹ *The War in Egypt and the Sudan*, by Thomas Archer, London (Blackie & Son), 1885, vol. i, p. 135.

And anxious that his Governor-General of Equatorial Africa should understand why it was that he thus importuned him, Ismail added :—

“ You are not unaware, my dear Sir Samuel, that the Sudan calls for heavy outlays for indispensable work such as the building of railways and other public utilities.

“ Faced with this state of affairs I am constrained, my dear Sir Samuel, to pray you to arrange matters so that the expenses of your expedition may be reduced to what is indispensable, and I ask that you do this in order that the other public works may be carried out which the interests of the Sudan require.”¹

It is a great pity that this letter is undated. It is a greater pity that Archer does not give his authority for his statement that the bill-brokers of Europe put pressure on Ismail to reduce the expenses brought about by his war on slavery. We say this because we feel that the chancelleries of Europe would have welcomed this penetration into Equatorial Africa if they had felt that they could have made anything out of it. There is almost always a subterranean connection between high finance and professional diplomacy. The Foreign Offices of Europe would, we suspect, have called off the bankers if they had not seen that Ismail was determined to emancipate himself from the tutelage of the Occident. It is to be feared that it was his independence of character that thus first estranged those who control the fate of Empires.

France, it is well to recall, looked upon the Egypt of Muhammad Said as a French dependency. England

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, file no. 72/1.

very properly resented this orientation of policy. Ismail worked hand in glove with Britain in his attack upon the terms of the de Lesseps canal concession. But the fact that he was opposed to having his country made a puppet of by France does not imply that he intended to throw himself into the arms of England. He saw no advantage in jumping from the frying-pan into the fire. He was ambitious and hoped to free Egypt of Turkish suzerainty. He feared that he might have to draw his sword in order to do so, and he turned his eyes to the United States for officers whom he could trust to mould his fighting machine into an irresistible force. He knew that he could depend upon their whole-hearted loyalty.

His attention had for months been riveted on that titanic struggle in which Blue and Grey crossed swords and turned the fields of Virginia into pools of red. He determined to enlist both Union and Confederate veterans and to commit to them the reorganization of his army. The fact that America had compelled Napoleon III to evacuate Mexico drove home to his mind the potentialities of the Republic of the West. He thus got into touch with friends in the United States and set his plans in motion.

Blue-book material cannot be found to bear out these statements. Ismail was nominally a vassal of Turkey. He had no diplomatic representatives in foreign parts. The official relations between Washington and Constantinople were impeccably correct. The United States could not take any part in facilitating the recruiting of officers whose main mission was sooner or later to fight Turkey. No official correspondence passed bearing upon the subject,

and it is quite probable that American Government officials knew nothing at all about Ismail's plan or what he was doing. It was not their business, and they do not appear to have been consulted by him or by anybody else. All that is known is that towards the end of 1868 or the beginning of 1869 the Viceroy got into touch with Colonel Thaddeus P. Mott, a scion of a distinguished New York family, whose sister had "married Blacque Bey, Turkish Minister at Washington",¹ and whose grand-nephew, Franklin Mott Gunther, subsequently represented America with great distinction at Cairo from 1928 to 1930.

Mott had been a dashing officer in the Union army. He was first attached to the viceregal household in a military capacity, but, after a short stay in Egypt, he returned to the United States in order to recruit American officers for service in the Egyptian Army. He had credentials from Ismail, and engaged demobilized Union and Confederate soldiers, usually either West Point or Annapolis men. His choice, or that of his successor, fell upon Generals Loring, Sibley, and Stone, Colonels Chaillé-Long, Colston, Derrick, Dye, Field, Jennifer, Kennon, Lockett, McIvor, Mason, Purdy, Prout, Alexander Reynolds, Frank Reynolds, Reed, Rhett, Rogers, Savage, Allen, and Ward, not to speak of three Lieutenant-Colonels, eight Majors, three Captains, and three Surgeons.

Before these men left America they signed contracts with the Egyptian Government, represented by Mott or his successor, in which they bound themselves :

"to make, wage, and vigorously prosecute war

¹ *My Life in Four Continents*, by Colonel Chaillé-Long, London (Hutchinson and Co.), 1912, vol. 1, p. 16.

against any and all enemies of the party of the first part wheresoever they may be."¹

A further clause specifically exempted these officers from fighting against the United States. And according to Colonel Chaillé-Long, who has written quite freely of his experiences, he and his comrades in arms were confidentially informed that, aside from the reorganization of the Egyptian Army, the real and immediate object of the employment was to strike a blow for the independence of Egypt and to sever that country from the tyranny of the Turkish yoke.² He quotes Ismail as saying to him at his introductory audience :—

"I count upon your discretion, devotion, and zeal to aid me in the establishment of the independence of Egypt. When this will be accomplished, as it will be, *Inshallah* ! I shall bestow upon you the highest honours."³

The crucial date in the history of the American officers in the Egyptian army is 30th March, 1870. It was then that Charles P. Stone was appointed Chief of Staff. This designation meant more than the choice of Mott, Loring, or Sibley, for there were many foreign officers in the Viceregal Army. This selection of the American, backed up and emphasized as it was by the nomination of so many of his compatriots, took on special significance. It marked the end of French hegemony. It implied even more. It did not mean merely that an Anglo-Saxon was replacing a Gaul, and that both Slav and Teuton

¹ The original contract between Mott and Thomas G. Rhett, of South Carolina, dated New York, 1st April, 1870, is in the possession of the present author.

² Chaillé-Long, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 17.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 32.

were outwitted. It said that a new era had dawned, that Ismail had emancipated Egypt from leading-strings, and that he was determined to be his own master. Everybody knew that the United States had no imperialistic designs on Egypt or Africa, and that Stone and his fellow-countrymen were not servants of Washington disguised in an Egyptian uniform.

On 30th March, 1870, few statesmen perceived that a great battle would shortly be fought and that Napoleon III would fall from his high eminence. It took Europe several months to grasp what the nomination of Stone really meant. At all events, before the Chancelleries of Europe recognized that Ismail was not fighting the slave trade and opening up Central Africa to civilization in order to present England and France with colonial possessions, the shock of the Franco-Prussian War absorbed attention. When the signature of the Treaty of Frankfort on 30th May, 1871, brought that conflict to an end, it took a few months to remove the debris. Thus time passed before the diplomats could bring pressure to bear on the bankers to get after Ismail for having dared to fight freedom's battle and for having begun the reorganization of his army without pledging his heart to Europe.

Baker was neither a professional soldier nor a Foreign Office man. He was as straight as an arrow, as true as steel. His appointment was a personal one. His record of achievement in discovering Albert Nyanza and in exploring the Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia, not his nationality, was the passport that had called him to Ismail's attention. The mission

given to Baker, interpreted in the light of the Stone appointment, told the diplomatic world—and its banking allies—that the Viceroy was a sovereign who intended to be his own master.

Sir Reginald Wingate, whose name is indelibly connected with Kitchener's reconquest of the Sudan, has written :—

“Previous to 1882 the [Egyptian] army had been trained by American officers, soldierly men of varied experience ; but they were permitted to have little or nothing to do with the actual training of the men ; they were chiefly employed on staff duties in connection with topographical and other work, and in explorations in the Sudan, and in the deserts between the Nile and the Red Sea.”¹

The work thus carried out by these American officers marks a glorious page in Ismail's record of accomplishment. A great part of it was lost because the Sudan was abandoned five years after his abdication, three years after the retirement from the Egyptian army of the last of these men from beyond the Atlantic, and six years after all of them save one had been forced, by the pressure of the bond-holders, to resign their commissions. But the part that they had played in unfolding the mystery of the Nile cannot be wiped out even by the cataclysm which engulfed the Sudan from 1885 to 1898. It is one of those achievements which nothing can delete from the records of time. It redounds to their glory, and it constitutes an important item on the credit side of Ismail's “moral principle” balance-sheet. And so do the other results

¹ *Mahdism and the Egyptian Sudan*, by Major F. R. Wingate, London (Macmillan and Co.), 1891, p. 204.

which they accomplished, even if the subsequent fate of the Sudan made them of no monetary value to Egypt.

No records are available in regard to the amount that this invaluable effort cost the Viceroy. It took money to carry on what Sir Reginald Wingate calls "topographical and other work, and explorations in the Sudan, and in the deserts between the Nile and the Red Sea", not to speak of the exploration of the sources of the Nile. But the total of this outlay can be surmised, in a vague way, from the rough outlines of a paper submitted by General Stone to the Khedivial Geographical Society on 8th December, 1882. In this summary account of his stewardship the American Chief of Staff begins by speaking of the surveys of the territory lying between Keneh and Kosseir undertaken in 1870-1 by an expedition under the command of Colonel Purdy, of California. He then passes to the reconnaissance of the port of Berenice on the Red Sea, and that of the road from that harbour across the desert to Keneh on the Nile made in 1873 by Colonel Colston, of Virginia.

These introductory remarks led General Stone to speak of the work done in 1874. This consisted of the complete scientific survey of the province of Darfur by Colonel Purdy. It included a like reconnaissance of Kordofan by Colonel Colston and a geological study of the territory between the Nile and the Red Sea carried out by Mitchell, of New York.

This same year, 1874, also witnessed the departure of Colonel Chaillé-Long, as General Gordon's Chief of Staff, when that gallant Englishman took over Baker's part as Governor-General of the Equatorial

provinces of Egypt. It also saw Colonel Purdy, accompanied by Colonel Mason, of Virginia, and Prout, of Massachusetts, begin the survey of Dongola, an assignment that was not terminated until 1877, and one which, says Stone, "enabled this expedition to make a complete survey of that vast empire and draw up a map which was new to geography." While these Americans were carrying out this work, the Egyptian army, under General Ismail Ayoub Pasha, established law and order in the same territory.

During these same years a detachment led by Colonel Colston carried out a scientific reconnaissance of Wady Matoul and opened the road from Debbeh to El Obeid. Another Mitchell expedition, organized for mineralogical, geological, and topographical purposes, explored the desert for many miles east and west of Rudesieh. In fact, the years from 1870 to 1876 are marked by a series of brilliant scientific achievements where French, English, Italian, and American names all unite in adding to the glory of Ismail the Maligned and in proving that what the Marquess of Zetland has called a "villainous reign" stands out as an epoch to which science is a debtor.¹

¹ *Bulletin de la Société Khédiviale de Géographie, II Série*, No. 7, June, 1885, Librairie Imprimerie Nationale, 1885, p. 344 et seq.

CHAPTER VII

THE GORDON MISSION

BAKER foresaw, well before the expiration of his contract, that he would not renew it. His letter conveying this information to Ismail has not been found ; but, from what the Viceroy wrote to him in February, 1872, we gather that he proposed that his successor should be his nephew, Lieutenant Julian Baker, R.N. The reply which this proposal received brings out Ismail's keen interest in the opening-up of Central Africa. He wrote :—

“ You propose your nephew as your successor. You may be sure that I consider that the experience which he has acquired under your orders is the best of recommendations. But the idea of opening Central Africa to science, commerce, and progress, is one that is so grand and has so completely taken possession of me that I feel that I must use the greatest circumspection in the choice of the person to whom I shall entrust the realization of my idea. I cannot, therefore, for the moment reply to your suggestion, but I shall consider it.”¹

There is no reason for doubting the absolute sincerity of this reply. The very fact that Ismail chose Charles George Gordon for the post to which he did not appoint young Baker demonstrates the perfect good faith which had dictated this letter. He

¹ Royal Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, file no. 72/1.

dreamed of a great Egyptian Empire in Africa, of the abolition of slavery throughout its wide expanse, and of his flag floating at the stern of merchant vessels plying the Equatorial lakes. It may have been the hallucination of an idealist, the reverie of an optimist, and the musing of a day-dreamer. But it was not what one would have expected to find running through the mind of a man whom one of the best-known English statesmen of the early days of the twentieth century has described as "luxurious, voluptuous, ambitious, fond of display, devoid of principle".¹

The chivalrous Sir Samuel Baker played a part in getting Ismail to think along the lines which have made a world figure of Cecil Rhodes. Here is an extract from one of the typical letters addressed by Baker to the Viceroy. It is dated Masindi, 10th May, 1872. It bears this heading :—

"E. Longitude $31^{\circ} 25'$.

"N. Latitude $1^{\circ} 45'$.

"Mean temperature 15° Reaumur, Altitude above ocean-level 4,194 English feet.

"Distance from the great lake Albert Nyanza 20 miles, *i.e.*, a day's march to the west. Distance from Ismailia, by route, 349 miles."

After setting forth, with obvious self-restraint, the difficulties he had encountered and some of the results he had obtained during this particular phase of his expedition, Baker wrote :—

"I hope that Your Highness will be satisfied with what I have done. The difficulties with which I was confronted were almost insurmountable, but, thank God, they have been conquered. Now that the slave

¹ Milner, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

traders are out of the country, the natives look with confidence upon the government of Your Highness.

"Before my return, I shall place the flag of Your Highness at least one degree South of the Equator, and thus the territory of Egypt will extend 33° south of Alexandria."

To this communication a postscript was added reading :—

"The King of Uganda has become a Muslim and has built a mosque. I shall at once build a school."¹

The King of Uganda had been a pagan. This postscript boiled down to twenty words a message of hope. It told Ismail that Islam had triumphed over idolatry and that illiteracy was yielding to literacy. One of Baker's last reports to his sovereign, probably his last official letter, was attuned to the same note. Its date is Khartum, 5th July, 1873. It has already been referred to in these pages as conveying the information that a great part of Central Africa had been annexed to Egypt. Its concluding paragraphs stress the moral features which flowed from this annexation. They read :—

"These, Monseigneur, in a few words, are the results of my expedition. The traffic in slaves has been suppressed and an immense area has been added to the territory of Your Highness. Lake Albert joins Lake Tanganyika, and thus, when camels reach Ismailia for the transport of the steam vessels, the great events of the future will begin by the establishment of navigation in Central Africa.

"Thank God, the foundations have been well laid,

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abidine Palace, Cairo, file no. 72/1.

and if Your Highness is content with what I have done, that will be my greatest recompense.”¹

It is true that both these reports from Baker to Ismail are subsequent in date to that letter to the explorer in which the sovereign speaks of his dream of Central Africa being opened to “science, commerce, and progress”, but everything tends to show that, from time to time, Baker kept the Viceroy informed of what was transpiring. For example, a letter dated Khartum, 9th October, 1870, conveyed this information :—

“I am thinking of establishing central stations, and of beginning to plant cotton in their neighbourhood. In this way it will be easy to plant, the first year, 1,000 acres at each station. Our eight stations will thus give us 8,000 acres under the plough and cost nothing. In the second year the profits should be double and the prosperity of the future will depend upon the energy of the administration.”²

Optimists are never economical ; pessimists are usually close-fisted. Optimists see everything in rose-coloured tints ; pessimists think in sombre shades. This last letter brings out the fervour and intensity of Baker's optimism. This is but another way of saying that he spent money freely. He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He inherited considerable wealth. He was what the French call a *grand seigneur*, and was liberality personified. Scrupulously honest, he disbursed his own gold as freely as he did that of the monarch whom he served. In case of doubt he interpreted his expense account against himself. There is no way of telling whether it was his own purse

¹ *Ibid.*, *l.c.*

² *Ibid.*, *l.c.*

or that of the viceroy which had bought what Gordon's American aide-de-camp thus describes in explaining the sumptuous dinner which his chief offered in 1874 to the notables of Khartum :—

“ Ayoub led me to the magazine, which concealed treasures indescribable. There, covered with dust, he showed me superb *vaisselle, service de Sèvres*, Bohemian glassware, fine knives and forks, damask table-linen, and—shades of Bacchus! wines of the best crues of Médoc, Burgundy, and the Champagne. ‘Did these come from the caves of Aladdin?’ I cried. ‘No,’ answered Ayoub, ‘Sir Samuel left them here, and they are turned over now to his successor.’ ”¹

It was not until 6th February, 1874, that Gordon arrived at Cairo to assume his duties as Baker's successor. “The Khedive is an honest fellow,” he observed in a letter to a friend, “and I like him very much, but I will not give it to the others.”² He threw a bomb into the midst of “the others” by fixing his salary at £2,000 a year, and refusing to accept the £10,000 per annum which his predecessor had received and earned.

Reciprocal confidence and friendship linked Ismail to Gordon from their very first meeting. They saw Central Africa through the same spectacles. They recognized the fact that “Slavery Regulation” rather than “Slavery Prohibition” should be their slogan. This may, perhaps, be an exaggeration. It would be more accurate to say that Gordon became convinced

¹ Chaillé-Long, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 82.

² Letter to the Rev. Horace Waller, 14th February, 1874, quoted in *Gordon and the Sudan*, by Bernard Mallen, London (Macmillan & Co.), 1937, p. 15.

that slavery is not a moral but an economic issue, that the feasible thing was to concentrate upon fighting slave-running, that the progress of civilization would swamp slavery in its back-wash, and that the viceroy gave him full latitude to carry out this policy.

One of the outstanding results of the Gordon expedition was the discovery by Colonel Chaillé-Long of Lake Ibrahim or Lake Kioga or Choga, or, as the *Encyclopædia Britannica* expresses it, the Kioga lake system. Chaillé-Long called this body of water Lake Ibrahim, in honour of the father of the monarch whom he served, but geographers now refer to it as Lake Kioga.¹ Another of its achievements was the circumnavigation of Lake Albert, first carried out by Gessi the Italian in 1876, and given scientific precision by Colonel Mason, of Virginia, in 1877.

The importance of the work of Mason resides in the fact that he discovered the existence of a river flowing out of Lake Albert and running to the south.² Subsequent investigations proved that this stream was the Semliki River, the missing link in what is now known as the Albertine source of the Nile. Chippendale and Watson, two Englishmen, played a noble part in this achievement by exploring the Nile from Magungo, where it leaves Lake Albert, to a point known as Duffli. And last, but not least, Gordon's own explorations of the Victoria Nile should not be overlooked.

All this warfare of progress against ignorance, and of freedom against slavery, cost money. A good

¹ *Bulletin de la Société Khédviale de Géographie*, III série, No. 7, Le Caire (Imprimerie Nationale), p. 539.

² *Bulletin de la Société Khédviale de Géographie*, No. 5, Le Caire, 1878, p. 5.

cook can prepare an omelette which is a culinary masterpiece, and another cook will take equally fresh eggs and turn out indigestible leather. But no cook can make an omelette without breaking eggs, and no general or explorer or archæologist can conduct an expedition without spending money. This work led by Gordon in 1874 and continuing right through to the very eve of Ismail's abdication necessarily cost, if not many, at all events several, tens of thousands of pounds.

The cataclysm that took place in the Sudan more than five years after the Viceroy's retirement from the viceregal throne did not wipe out this contribution to science. The loss of the Black Country during the reign of Tewfik may have permitted slavery to be re-established where Baker and Gordon had eradicated it ; it may have obliterated the commercial advantages to civilization born of the opening-up of Central Africa ; it may have destroyed the mosque dedicated by the King of Uganda and the school built by Baker, but it could not engulf the explorations due to the inspiration, the munificence, and the tenacity of Ismail. All these achievements may not have a pecuniary value. Nobody has ever said that they necessarily had. But they have a moral worth which, to keep on hammering at the same chord, should find a place in the Viceroy's " moral principle " balance-sheet.

One of Gordon's contributions to the war against slavery was the drawing up of a treaty between England and Egypt. It is dated 4th August, 1877. Its preamble sets forth that the Government of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and

Ireland, and the Government of His Highness the Khedive, being animated by a sincere desire to co-operate in putting an end to the traffic in slaves, have resolved to enter into a Treaty in order to attain that end. The Pact declares, among other things, that the importation of slaves into Egypt is prohibited, and that England and Egypt shall co-operate in the Red Sea in order to prevent what would now be called slave boot-legging.¹

The signing of a Treaty, of itself, means nothing. It may be camouflage or a smoke-screen. It is the way in which it is executed that affords the real criterion of its import. Ismail's conduct answers this test. Just as his sincerity in the first stage of his fight on slavery was demonstrated by the way in which he dipped into his pocket to have the *corvée* abolished in the construction of the Suez Canal, and just as he proved his good faith in the second phase by giving plenary authority first to Sir Samuel Baker and afterwards to Charles George Gordon, so did he give irrefutable evidence of the continuance of this lofty attitude by choosing an English naval officer to represent him in the execution of this pact.

No personal predilection guided him in this selection. His Minister for Foreign Affairs wrote to Her Britannic Majesty's Consul-General on 11th September, 1877, an official letter couched in these terms :—

“ In order to guarantee the proper surveillance of the ports of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the eastern shores of Arabia, so that no slaves may be

¹ *Conventions, Décrets, Règlements et Instructions relatifs à la suppression de la Traité des Esclaves*, Imprimerie de l'état Général, 1880.

able to break through the barrier envisaged by the Treaty of 4th August, His Highness the Khedive desires to commit this branch of the service to an officer of the English navy who, through his special knowledge and intelligence, would be able to carry out this important mission.

"It is obvious that this Treaty cannot be made effective if a strict watch be not kept for those who may seek to violate its provisions. His Highness, therefore, prays Her Majesty's Consul-General to communicate to his Government this desire of His Highness's Government."¹

London recommended Lieutenant-Commander Malcolm. Ismail made him a Pasha. His official title was "Director-General of the service for the suppression of the Slave Trade". The official letter which advised him of his appointment is dated 3rd January, 1878, and conveys this pertinent information :—

"Your wide experience and the distinguished services which you have rendered to the Government of Her Britannic Majesty in an analogous mission are the best guarantee that your co-operation in this work will insure the realization of the results which we have in view."²

But, unfortunately for everybody concerned, Malcolm Pasha and Gordon could not get on with one another. They had to work in harmony, or the Red Sea work would come to nought. As early as 11th July, 1878, Ismail wrote to the British Consul-General :—

"Unfortunately, Malcolm Pasha and Gordon

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, file no. 98011.

² *Ibid.*, file no. 72/6, no. 20972.

Pasha cannot come to an understanding, and he [Malcolm] has tended me his resignation. I have hesitated to accept it, but, after mature deliberation, I have felt that it is my duty to do so in view of Gordon Pasha's high rank, the services which he has rendered Egypt, and those which we expect from him."¹

A letter addressed to Ismail by Malcom, dated Freiburg, Germany, 6th July, 1878, shows that the Viceroy was absolutely right when he said that the two Britons could not work in double harness. The naval officer states specifically that :—

"Notwithstanding my great respect for and devotion to the person of Your Highness, it is my duty to say that it is impossible for me to serve under Gordon Pasha or to have any communication with him, directly or indirectly, and for this decision my public reasons are . . .": and here follow five grounds, one of which is libellous, one defamatory and three highly uncomplimentary. And there are other incriminatory attacks not included in this enumeration.²

It will have been noted that the date of the Malcolm correspondence marks the beginning of the last lap in Ismail's race against the exigencies of the bill-brokers. He appears to have allowed the post to remain vacant, and to have permitted Gordon to handle this detail of the war against slavery. In taking this action his sincerity of purpose is impregnably entrenched. And thus, in considering this Red Sea aspect of the fight against the slave-hunters, another item in the Viceroy's "moral principle" balance-sheet forces itself to the fore. Its amount must remain another x .

Gordon saw, soon after his arrival in Equatorial

¹ *Ibid.*, file no. 72/6, no. 16367.

² *Ibid.*, file no. 8078.

Africa, that the great lakes could be opened to civilization more readily by approaching them from the Indian Ocean than by following the Nile Valley. He noted in his diary on 21st January, 1875 :—

“ I have proposed to the Khedive to send 150 men in a steamer to Mombaz Bay, 250 miles north of Zanzibar, and there to establish a station, and then to push towards M’tesa.¹ If I can do that, I shall make my base at Mombaz, and give up Khartum and the bother of the steamers, etc. The Centre of Africa would be much more effectually opened out, as the only valuable parts of the country are the high lands near M’tesa, while all south of this and Khartum is wretched marsh. I hope the Khedive will do it.”²

On 20th November, 1875, Gordon made this further entry in his Journal :—

“ On the 16th, however, as I was looking over the post bag, another packet came to light—a very thick one from the Khedive, telling me he had put McKillop under my command and had sent him with three men-of-war to Juba, with 600 men to occupy it, and for me to march up and put Long under him.”³

The picture drawn by these two entries in Gordon’s Journal is that of an officer in the field who considers that the success of his campaign calls for sending “ 150 men in a steamer ” to a strategic point, while his commander-in-chief answers him by saying that he has sent a naval commander “ with three men-of-war with 600 men to occupy ” this position. But

¹ King of Uganda.

² *Colonel Gordon in Central Africa, 1874-1879*, from original letters and documents, edited by George Birbeck Hill, London (Thos. de la Rue & Company), 1881, p. 65.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

it took money—and plenty of it—to act in this manner. A war is not an afternoon tea, where a few flowers daintily placed, a few sandwiches attractively presented and weak tea and weaker milk may represent the total outlay. It is an expensive affair, and Ismail had to pay in gold for supporting Gordon in the great fight to redeem Central Africa from slavery and barbarism.

The McKillop referred to in Gordon's diary was a Scotsman who had been a captain in the British navy and had, according to Chaillé-Long, violated the blockade in the War with the States ; and on this fact having been brought to the notice of the British Foreign Office, he had been detached from duty and appointed to a post in Egypt. "Long" is the American who is known to these pages as Chaillé-Long. There was also another American in this expedition, a Colonel Ward, of Virginia, a graduate of the Annapolis Naval Academy and an officer in the Confederate Navy. There was also an Italian named Frederico Pasha. In a word, Ismail recruited foreigners in whom he had confidence and gave them plenary authority.

Great secrecy attended the inauguration of the campaign thus undertaken at Gordon's suggestion. Chaillé-Long was in Cairo when instructions were given him on 16th September, 1875, to proceed immediately to Suez and assume command of the troops which had been assembled there and placed aboard the transports "*Tantah*" and "*Dessouk*". Sealed orders reached him, by special messenger, at midnight of the 18th. With them was a note from the Viceroy which said : "You will steam to the

south five hundred miles before breaking the seals of your secret orders." The ships sailed out of port at dawn of the 19th. Three days later the navigating officer reported that he had covered the desired distance and that he required further instructions. The American broke the viceregal seals and read this note, signed by Ismail, dated 14th September, 1875 :

"In conformity with the verbal orders given you, you are to leave Suez, where you will find three companies, munitions, etc., which you will take to Berbera upon the steamers "*Tantah*" and "*Dessouk*". You will deliver to McKillop Pasha the instructions of which you are the bearer. McKillop will embark two other companies at Berbera and sail for Juba immediately. It is not necessary to repeat that I desire that the secret as to the destination of the expedition shall be kept until you arrive at Juba. I have written to McKillop in this sense, and I charge you, Colonel, to reiterate this order to him verbally. I count, Colonel, upon your zeal, your activity and your intelligence."¹

A letter written by Nubar Pasha to McKillop, dated 16th September, 1875, emphasizes the secrecy surrounding the expedition. It said :—

"Colonel Long will transmit your orders to you. They will tell you what is to be done. The mission entrusted to you is very important and calls for a man with both head and heart. This is why the Khedive has chosen you. I have but one recommendation to make, and in making it I am but following the idea of the Khedive. It is that you be extremely discreet and make use of the greatest circumspection should

¹ Chaillé-Long, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 175.

diplomatic agents accredited to the Sultan of Zanzibar get in touch with you and invite you to retire, in the name of the Sultan or in that of their Government.

"This latter hypothesis seems to me to be improbable, if not impossible, unless the Government in whose name this diplomatic agent may act has decided to put itself openly in the place of the Sultan ; but as yet no Government has set forth such a claim. Should this contingency arise, refer this intermediary or diplomatic agent at once to the Khedive. It is to His Highness that communications should be made, as you will be doing nothing but carrying out orders. I need not tell you that any pretensions that the Sultan may advance are absolutely without foundation. His Highness directs me to say that you must keep secret, in fact more than secret, the object of your mission. Apart from Colonel Long, who is aware of it, nobody on board must be allowed to know that you are going to Juba."¹

The secret instructions given by Ismail to McKillop are even more interesting. They are dated 7th September, 1875. After setting forth that Chaillé-Long—or Long as he calls him—will have a total of five battalions under his command, the Viceroy continued thus :—

"In order that you may be imbued with the spirit of your mission and may thus be able to face any fortuitous circumstance that may arise, I am submitting to you under this cover a copy of the orders which I am sending to General Gordon. You will see that they contemplate the opening up to commerce of

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, file 73/2, no. 11837.

a new line of communications between the lakes and the ocean. It is in this work, committed to the General, that you are to co-operate.

"The outlet which I have indicated to Gordon Pasha is the mouth of the River Juba. That is where you must go. You must disembark at that point and there await the arrival of General Gordon or the instructions which he will send to you, for one of your first duties will be to locate and get in touch with him."

Specific instructions followed in regard to what McKillop should do while awaiting Gordon's arrival. The following paragraph was thrown in among these general orders :—

"During his sojourn in Cairo the Sultan of Zanzibar spoke to me about the claims that he sets up to all the coast as far as Cape Affoun. I did not care to contradict him. He was my guest, and silence was imposed upon me by the most elementary laws of courtesy and hospitality. He told me that he intended, as soon as he returned home, to raise his flag over Juba and Cape Affoun. It is in order to avoid further difficulties, to prevent him from carrying out an act of usurpation, and from invading our territory that I have rushed forward your departure. When our flag floats over the mouth of the Juba, this affirmation of our rights will obviate the regrettable consequence which might follow were he to carry out his intentions.

"I am convinced that when you get to Juba you will find no flag there and no authority established, and that your landing will be made pacifically. But we must envisage the possibility of the place being

occupied either nominally or effectively. In either case you will approach the occupants in a friendly spirit and invite them to leave. If they do not do so, use the military means which I have put in your hands, for we are called upon to re-enter on the possession of a territory which belongs to my government. I want you to be clear in your mind on this point : the mouth of the Juba belongs to us. I want to live in friendly relations with the Sultan of Zanzibar, but I cannot permit that my rights be impaired by him or that my territory be occupied by him.”¹

No inquiry will here be made into the validity of the title upon which Ismail laid such stress. There appears to be no reason for doubting his good faith. It is quite probable that the Sultan of Zanzibar was equally sincere in his pretensions. The frontiers of the western shores of the Indian Ocean were, in those days, so badly defined that both of them may well have laid claim to territory that belonged to neither but which each imagined was his. But inasmuch as Ismail personified the cause of freedom and the Sultan of Zanzibar the aspirations of slave-hunters, it might have been thought that Europe would have sympathized with the Viceroy and have welcomed the triumph of liberalism over obscurantism.

But, be this as it may, the expedition arrived off the mouth of the Juba River on 16th October. An angry surf made landing impossible, and McKillop steamed fifteen miles further south to a point called Kismayu, where there was a good harbour. The fortress contained five 12-pounders, a quantity of

¹ *Ibid.*, file 73/2, no. 11834.

arms and four hundred soldiers, above whose head floated the flag of Zanzibar. The garrison put up no resistance, and when it had surrendered, Chaillé-Long captured more than five hundred slaves who were camped within the walls of the fortress, the slave-hunters awaiting an opportunity to ship their "black ivory to market".¹

A few days later instructions dated 29th October came to McKillop, ordering him to move further south to a point called Formosa. It was set forth in the dispatch that Juba was not the type of headquarters that was wanted, and that Formosa answered the requirements of the expedition.² After a short delay another dispatch reached McKillop from Cairo. It told him that the Imam of Zanzibar had protested to the British Government against the Egyptian landing at Kismayu.³ A subsequent communication repeated this information and added "if you have not gone to Formosa, do not go there".⁴

Pressure was brought to bear upon Ismail by a greater Power than Zanzibar to abandon the expedition, and yet, writes Chaillé-Long :—

"Kismayu was not only a place of ill-repute, but the inhabitants were wreckers and slave traders. Our expedition, therefore, in taking possession of Kismayu had merited well of the civilized world ; the more so that it had captured and liberated more than four hundred slaves."⁵ But all this expenditure of money, dedicated to a good cause, was wasted

¹ Chaillé-Long, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 181.

² Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, file 73/2, no. 22025.

³ *Ibid.*, file 73/2, no. 8654.

⁴ *Ibid.*, file 73/2, no. 14677.

⁵ Chaillé-Long, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 191.

because a nation which stood high in the councils of Europe and in the vanguard of progress would not allow Ismail to proceed. Cash disbursed in such an endeavour, wasted though it may have been, may well be counted in making up a "moral principle" balance-sheet.

CHAPTER VIII

CANALS AND BRIDGES

THAT wars beget wars is as true in Africa as it is in Europe. The attempt to subjugate Central Africa by approaching the Great Lakes from the Indian Ocean might possibly have involved Egypt in trouble with a Great Power if Ismail had not seen the wisdom of bowing to the inevitable. But another phase of this war against slavery was destined to bring on international complications.

It appears that in 1875 a command under an Egyptian officer was sent through the straits of Babel-Mandeb to Zeila on the Arabian Gulf. It marched to Harrar, the principal centre of the province of that name. The place, with its rich coffee fields, was seized and fortified. It was claimed as part of the kingdom of Zeila, so long held by the Mussulman, and was occupied as a means of curbing the power of the Abyssinians, who, though Christians, were believed to be in league with the leaders of the slave *razzias*. Instructions were given to Muntzinger Bey, a Swiss who commanded Ismail's troops in that neighbourhood, to sail for Amphila Bay on the Red Sea and to march towards the slopes of the Haramat Mountains where the Abyssinians and the surrounding tribes obtained their supplies of salt. Muntzinger Bey, on his way through the desert, was ambushed

by the Abyssinians. He and his whole party were exterminated.¹

In October, 1875, Arrendrup, a Danish lieutenant who had gone to Egypt for his health and had been employed in the civil and military service of the Egyptian Government, was appointed colonel and assigned to the leadership of an expedition to Abyssinia. He had on his staff Major Dennison, an American who had served in the Union Army during the American Civil War, Major Dorholtz, a Swiss, and Count Zichy, a Hungarian. His command consisted of 2,500 infantry, armed with Remington rifles, two six-gun batteries of mountain howitzers, and six rocket stands.²

The expedition was divided into detachments. The first was led by Colonel Arrendrup. Zichy was with him, as was Arakel Bey, Governor of Massawah. It met the Abyssinians on 15th November, 1875, on the banks of the Mareb River. The fight lasted but a few minutes. No mercy was shown, no quarter was given. Arrendrup, the Dane, and Zichy, the Hungarian, died surrounded by Arakel Bey and their Arab troops.³ Dennison was powerless and prudently retreated.

Ismail determined to wipe out this defeat. The new army was placed under the command of Ratib Pasha, a Circassian. "He was," writes Colonel William McE. Dye, an American who served under him and who has published a full account of the campaign, "ever small of stature but shrivelled up

¹ *A Confederate Soldier in Egypt*, by W. W. Loring, New York (Dodd, Mead and Company), 1884, p. 301.

² *Ibid.*, *l.c.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

like a mummy is with age." ¹ His second-in-command was the one-armed American, Brigadier-General Loring, of Florida, whose book *A Confederate Soldier in Egypt* has been cited in these pages. With him were also the following Americans: Colonel Charles Field, of Virginia, Lieut.-Col. Derrick, of Virginia, Major Loeshe, Major Robert Schuyler Lamson, Surgeon-Major W. W. Wilson, of Ohio, Captain David Essex Porter, Captain Irgens, of Montana, Surgeon-Major Johnson, of Tennessee, and Colonel Samuel H. Lockett, of Alabama. Lieutenant C. J. Graves, of Georgia, who had served in the Confederate Navy, had charge of water transportation, the lightering vessels, and analogous work.

The Army, to quote Dye again, consisted of:—

(1) Four regiments of infantry, aggregating 9,600 men, 68 horses, and 720 mules;

(2) one regiment of cavalry, 800 men, 900 horses;

(3) two field batteries, two mountain batteries, and one rocket battery, aggregating 474 men, 54 horses, and 334 mules;

(4) one company of sappers and miners, 150 men, 6 horses, 100 mules, and

(5) the general staff, composed of the general-in-chief, chief of staff, two generals of brigade, two colonels, three lieutenant-colonels, six majors, two captains, three lieutenants, two subalterns, and fourteen soldiers. The staff had thirty horses and fifty mules. These figures, plus the remains of the Arrendrup expedition, brought the total number of men to an aggregate of twelve thousand.

¹ *Moslem Egypt and Christian Abyssinia*, New York (Atkin & Prout), 1880, p. 152.

The officers of the Sudan Government who have issued the official compendium known as *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*, describe with laconic brevity the fate of this expedition. They write :—

“ The Egyptian headquarters arrived at Massawah about the middle of December. Owing, however, to the disorganized state of the staff and the difficulties of transport, the army did not get away till the middle of January, 1876. After tedious marches it arrived at the Kaya Khor (Kaya Pass) near which place, at Gura, it was met and heavily defeated by King John on 7th March, losing nearly 4,000 men and 8,000 rifles.”¹

The figures given by Colonel Dye differ somewhat from those which have just been quoted. He puts the Egyptian losses at :—

	“ Staff	Line	Total
“ Killed	4	1,110	1,114
“ Wounded	9	1,607	1,616
“ Captured	3	2,186	2,189 ”

Of the captured only 130 were subsequently returned to the Egyptians. The others were massacred. “ In other words,” records Dye, “ of the 5,200 men we took into battle, 3,273 were killed or fatally wounded, 1,416 were wounded, and 530 escaped. . . . The enemy also captured thirteen pieces of artillery, all the small arms of the killed, wounded, and prisoners, and all the unexpended ammunition on the field.”

It would serve no useful purpose to refer at greater length to this series of unsuccessful

¹ *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, a compendium prepared by the officers of the Sudan Government.* London. Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1905, vol. i, p. 238.

campaigns where Ismail entrusted the leadership of his forces first to a Swiss, then to a Dane, and afterwards to an Egyptian with an American staff. Suffice it to say that his triumphs in the domains of exploration and of scientific survey in Central Africa were not repeated in the battles fought in the plains or among the mountains of Abyssinia. But before he be too severely criticized for this loss of men and money it may not be amiss to point out once more that the Cave Report contains this categorical statement :—

“The Khedive has engaged to some extent in these enterprises for the sake of the suppression of the Slave Trade, and the Abyssinian war was almost forced upon him.”¹

While these figures of the aggregate number of men under Muntzinger, Arrendrup, and Ratib seem nothing to a generation which has followed the Great War, the armies thus assembled and equipped cost relatively large sums. The amounts expended could not be met out of the current receipts of the Egyptian Government, any more than could the outlay necessitated by the titanic struggle of 1914–1918 be absorbed by the infinitely larger budgets of the Great Powers then at war. Lord Cromer overlooked this fact. He did not mean to be unfair and he no doubt felt that he was writing with impartial objectivity when he recorded in *Modern Egypt* :—

“Mr. Cave, after making out a balance-sheet for the years from 1864 to 1875, adds : ‘Two striking features stand out in this balance-sheet, namely, that the sum raised by revenue, £94,281,401, is little less than that spent on administration, tribute

¹ McCoan, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

to the Porte, works of unquestionable utility, and certain expenses of questionable utility or policy, in all amounting to £97,240,966, and that for the large amount of indebtedness there is absolutely nothing to show but the Suez Canal, the whole proceeds of the loans and floating debts having been absorbed in payment of interest and sinking funds, with the exception of the sum debited to that great work."¹

Lord Cromer put this quotation into the shape of a note to back up his affirmation already quoted, reading :—

"Roughly speaking it may be said that Ismail Pasha added, on an average, about £7,000,000 a year for thirteen years to the debt of Egypt. For all practical purposes it may be said that the whole of the borrowed money, except £16,000,000 spent on the Suez Canal, was squandered."

The sting in the charge thus formulated by the great administrator resides in the word "squandered". Let it be admitted that not a penny of the loans and floating debts, save for those devoted to the building of the Suez Canal, has any equivalent tangible asset to represent it, does it necessarily follow that this deficit has been "squandered"? What does the word "squander" imply when Ismail has been pilloried before the bar of history as "as fine a type of the spendthrift as can well be found, whether in history or fiction"? "No equally reckless prodigal ever possessed equally unlimited control of equally vast resources"?² It means that "luxurious, voluptuous, ambitious, fond of display, devoid of principle",³

¹ Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 11, note.

² Milner, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

³ *Ibid.*, *l.c.*

as Lord Milner says he was, he took the *fellah's* money and spent it in debauchery, ostentation, and gambling. If it does not mean this, what does it mean? It certainly does not imply that he may have used a considerable proportion of this deficit in discovering the sources of the Nile, in exploring the Sudan and Central Africa, in fighting the Slave Trade, and in carrying on a war which the Cave Report says "was almost forced on him".

The mistake into which Lord Cromer and his exceptionally brilliant coadjutors, Milner and Colvin, fell when they ceased to be officials and became publicists, was that they allowed their clearness of vision to be blurred by the poisonous gases arising from the morass from which they extricated Egypt. Take, for example, Viscount Milner. He was the first of this trinity to burst into print. His book was published in 1892. He was then Mr. Alfred Milner. He did not get his K.C.B. until 1895, and he had served in Egypt as Under-Secretary of Finance from 1889 to 1892.

Those were troublesome years. The race against bankruptcy had been won, but the Khalifa still menaced the frontiers of Egypt. France and Russia were pin-pricking England. Tewfik Pasha died while these months were running their course, and the young Khedive was an unknown problem full of unpleasant potentialities. Milner was naturally impressed with the enormity of the task which confronted England, and was very properly filled with pride at what Britain had accomplished in the face of French antagonism and the menace of the Khalifa.

He unwittingly overlooked the fact that Ismail

was not responsible for the cantankerous attitude of Paris and St. Petersburg, and that all the trouble south of Asswan had started, grown, and assumed its engulfing character after Ismail had abdicated. Had the trees not hidden the jungle, Milner's innate sense of fairness would have prompted him to use fewer superlatives and less drastic language in attributing practically exclusively to the thirteen years which ended in 1879, conditions which were so nerve-destroying between 1889 and 1892.

The same general remarks apply to Sir Auckland Colvin. His book came out in 1906. Kitchener had then redeemed the Sudan. The territory which was made into the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan was considerably smaller than that over which Ismail had not merely reigned but ruled. But Colvin had been Financial Adviser to the Egyptian Government from 1883-7, and when he became a historian in 1906 his mind reflected the greatness of what had been accomplished in the light of the tremendous difficulties encountered by him during his four years' mandate. He had also been Egyptian Comptroller-General of Finance from 1880 to 1882, that is to say shortly after the retirement of Ismail. Those were the days which recalled Shakespeare's words : " and none so poor to do him reverence." The errors that the Viceroy had committed so dominated Colvin that he failed to remember that there are two sides to most questions.

Lord Cromer was born Evelyn Baring. This means that atavism saturated his mind with balance-sheets, and made him think in terms of liquid credits, convertible securities, and tangible assets. He was

an ideal trustee in bankruptcy. He knew how to collect what was due to a receivership, and how to expend what he had amassed in such a way as to make a shilling do the work of a pound. He had the imagination of an Empire-builder and the temperament of a certified accountant. He was a soldier who was a statesman and a diplomatist who was a financier. Big enough for any job anywhere, with a heart of gold and a pen that was sometimes dipped in acid, when he wrote his *Modern Egypt* in 1908 he was drafting his *apologia pro vita sua*. He had the Gordon episode to make clear and the account of his stewardship to prepare for the audit of future generations.

A man whose name was Baring, whose post was that of a trustee in bankruptcy, and who was expected to evoke order out of chaos, saw the estate which was committed to his charge solely in the light of its convertibility into something realizable. If he had been shown that millions had been spent on fighting slavery, on scientific reconnaissance, and on exploring the unknown head-waters of a great and mysterious river, he would have said : " This is most interesting, but where are the fruits produced by such an expenditure ? " He came to Cairo as Consul-General in 1883, just when Hicks was about to depart for a tragic death at El Obeid. The Sudan was then in flames. He would have answered his own question by the reply : " I see nothing upon which a banker would lend a farthing."

If he had been shown that millions had been applied to education, he would have answered : " Most commendable, but this money has no value as collateral security." And so would he have done, in perfect

good faith, with every item of a "moral principle" balance-sheet, As pure as a woman in his private life and impeccable in his public career, he looked upon money as "squandered" when it was not represented by something tangible and negotiable of equal value. Frozen assets were anathema to him. The spiritual, the sentimental, the æsthetic aspect of expenditure carried no message to a mind which was that not of a Shylock, but of a utilitarian.

It is most regrettable that a sense of cricket, rather than an infatuation for accountancy, did not guide Lord Cromer's subconscious mind when he accused Ismail of squandering "the whole of the borrowed money, except £16,000,000 spent on the Suez Canal". Had this been the case he would have noted that immediately preceding the extract from the Cave Report quoted by him were specific figures giving the sums applied to "Administration", "Tribute to the Porte", "Works of unquestionable utility or policy". They are :—

"Expenditure

"Administration	£48,868,491
"Tribute to the Porte	7,592,872
"Works of Utility, etc.	30,240,058
"Extraordinary Expenses— some of questionable utility and others under pressure of interested parties	10,539,545"

These four items give a grand total of £97,240,966, and thus enable the student of history to follow the chain of reasoning of the Cave Report, for this is the exact sum which is there given.

These four headings interest the historian even if they may not have been analysed by Lord Cromer,

the publicist, whose *Modern Egypt* reflects the point of view of a banker. The first item is by far the largest of the group. It is "Administration", and accounts for £48,868,491. It refers to a period of thirteen years. What does it cover? This inquiry seems to force the answer: routine expenses of Government, including the Civil List of the Sovereign and of the viceregal family, the salaries and pensions of officials and public servants, the current outlay of the various ministries, and the upkeep of the property of the state. A sum of £3,759,114 per annum for these various governmental agencies does not appear to be manifestly excessive.

The item "Tribute to the Porte", £7,592,872, is not open to discussion. It is a fixed budgetary charge, born of a Treaty. The entry, "Works of Utility, £30,240,058," calls on the other hand for careful scrutiny. So does the next debit, "Extraordinary expenses—some of questionable utility, and others under pressure of interested parties, £10,539,545."

It is obvious that in dealing with these two latter groups of subjects, the Cave Commission passed, from accountancy, properly so called, to a somewhat broader field. It appraised the intrinsic value of Ismail's public improvements. It said, in substance:—

"£30,240,058 have been spent on works that are of real value and £10,539,545 on others that are not."

This means that, including both the wheat and chaff, Ismail put, according to the Cave Report, £40,779,603 into public works. The Commission does not state specifically in what these improvements consisted. Lord Cromer did not throw any light upon

the question. This may, perhaps, be due to what Lord Milner calls "the absolute chaos of the accounts previous to 1876".¹ There is, however, an article by M. G. Mulhall published in the *Contemporary Review* of October, 1882, which contains a table of figures. It leads up to them by the following paragraph:—

"Although the bondholders have inculcated the impression that Ismail Pasha squandered the money which he obtained from Europe, it is beyond doubt that the public works constructed by him cost more than the total net proceeds of the loans. The following table does not include interest on contracts, but merely the amount expended in the works:—

<i>Work</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Observations</i>
Suez Canal . . .	£6,770,000	After deducting value of shares sold.
Nile Canals . . .	£12,600,000	Made 8,400 miles at £1,500 per mile.
Bridges . . .	£2,150,000	Built 430 at £5,000 per bridge.
Sugar-mills . . .	£6,100,000	Built 64 with machinery, etc.
Harbour, Alexandria .	£2,542,000	Greenfield and Elliot contract.
Suez Docks . . .	£1,400,000	Dussaud Bros.
Alexandria Water Works	£300,000	Price agreed to by Paris Syndic.
Railways . . .	£13,361,000	Length 910 miles (new).
Telegraphs . . .	£853,000	Length 5,200 miles (new).
Lighthouses . . .	£188,000	Built 15 on the Red Sea and Mediterranean.
<hr/>		
£46,264,000" ²		

We have not checked these figures. We assume that the chaotic conditions to which Viscount Milner

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

² *Egyptian Finance*, by M. G. Mulhall, *The Contemporary Review*, London, October, 1882, p. 529.

refers and which frightened off the Earl of Cromer would not warrant him in going behind the data submitted by Mulhall. At all events, the grand total given by the magazine article dovetails with the facts adduced by the Cave Commission. There is, it is true, a difference of £5,484,397 between the two sets of figures, but a close scrutiny of both readily explains this apparent contradiction.

The first step in this analysis tends to complicate matters and to accentuate the divergence of views. The following paragraph is contained in the Mulhall article :—

“ In Mr. Cave’s report, the Khedive credits himself with the enormous sum of £16,075,000 for the Suez Canal, but I find that this includes interest as well as the value of the shares sold to the British Government. The account is dissected thus :—

	£
“ Sum in Khedive’s books . . .	16,075,000
“ Interest included above . . .	5,328,000
“ Received from British Government . .	3,977,000
	<hr/>
“ Correct item of outlay . . .	£6,770,000 ” ¹

The figures thus given by Mulhall tend to prove that the Cave Commission was too generous to Ismail. It credits him with £16,075,000 for an outlay of merely £6,770,000. He has thus been overcredited on the Suez Canal entry to the extent of the difference between these two sums, or £9,305,000. It thus follows that the Cave data and the Mulhall figures disagree by £9,305,000 plus £5,485,397 or by a total of £14,790,397.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 530.

But the Mulhall article sets forth that :—

“The Nile canals, of which Ismail constructed 112, must always remain the greatest work of his reign, although we find no mention of them in Mr. Cave’s report. . . . By means of these canals, the people succeeded in reclaiming from the desert no less than 1,373,000 acres, representing a gross annual product of crops worth £11,000,000 or a rental value of £1,400,000 per annum.”¹

Here is a further paragraph :—

“There is no return of the amount expended on 430 bridges, but an average of £5,000 must be below the reality, since one of them, between Cairo and Bulac, cost £105,000. This is another item which escaped Mr. Cave’s attention and that of others who wrote on Ismail Pasha’s expenditures.”²

The substantial accuracy of these Mulhall figures is confirmed by the confidential report of the American official, Consul-General Beardsley, already quoted in these pages. He writes :—

“112 new canals have been excavated and 426 new bridges built, of which 150 are in Upper Egypt and 276 in Lower Egypt. The principal of these canals are : The Canal Ismailiah in Lower Egypt, 98 kilometres long, with 11 million cubic metres of excavations ; the Canal Ibrahimieh, in Upper Egypt, 150 kilometres long, with 38 million cubic metres of excavations ; and the Canal Behereh in Lower Egypt, 42 kilometres, with 10 million cubic metres of excavations. These are navigable canals. Besides the new canals excavated, all the old ones have been thoroughly cleaned and many of them deepened. . . .

¹ *Ibid.*, *l.c.*

² *Ibid.*, *l.c.*

"A fine iron bridge, 406 metres long, has been built over the Nile at Cairo connecting the city with the island of Gezireh. It was opened to the public in February, 1872, and is estimated to have cost 2,700,000 francs. . . . In Cairo the public improvements have been so many and the changes so great within a few years that it is difficult for a stranger fully to appreciate their nature and extent."¹

The importance of these canals and bridges thus emphasized, it becomes necessary to get back to Mulhall's *Egyptian Finances*. It will be recalled that the amount spent on "Nile Canals" is there fixed at £12,600,000, and that referred to under the heading "Bridges" is put at £2,150,000. $£12,600,000 + £2,150,000 = £14,750,000$. This is, to all intents and purposes, the exact net difference between the Cave and the Mulhall figures (£14,790,397), the slight diversity resulting from the fact that Mulhall reduces everything to round numbers.

The object of the present chapter is not to pick flaws in the Cave Report. It may readily be admitted, for the sake of argument, that its reasoning is impeccable, and its facts and figures accurate. The only point that is stressed, and this merely parenthetically, is that when the Cave Commission spoke of "works of unquestionable utility and certain expenses of questionable utility or policy" and attributed a grand total of £40,779,603 to these two heads, it expressed an opinion on a matter where other experts, equally conscientious and competent, might well hold contrary views. But there is one fact flowing

¹ Archives, American Legation, Cairo, Official Correspondence, 1869-1873, p. 440.

from the Report where two points of view are not possible. It is that it says nothing of the £14,750,000 that these canals and bridges cost Ismail, and that it brushes aside the millions that these foreign wars, explorations, and scientific expeditions absorbed.

This deduction is not advanced as a reproach to Sir Stephen Cave and the very able men who shared his labours. They had a magnifying-glass which was focused to find assets which could protect bondholders. Somehow or other they overlooked these canals and bridges. This might easily be due to the chaotic condition of the accounts. The lens disclosed Public Works of "unquestionable utility" and others of "questionable utility", but did not register canals and bridges, because the book-keeping had been bad. And, of course, it did not bring out anything about millions for foreign wars, explorations, and scientific expeditions. This latter condition was due to the fact that the terms of reference were :—

"Go to Egypt. Examine Ismail's books. Tell us whether he is solvent or insolvent. Recapitulate his debts; marshal his assets, enumerate them, and appraise them. Give us an audit, not a character sketch."

And, construing their mandate in this sense, and properly so interpreting it, but, unfortunately, failing to see the canals and bridges and the £14,750,000 spent on them, these gentlemen dealt with that part of Ismail's portfolio which they saw, and not with his conscience. Their report is that of experts who reported upon what they saw. It does not say, to quote Mulhall, that :—

"He, Ismail, started village-banks on the *Crédit Foncier* system to save the Fellaheen from usurers,

and lost £900,000 in the venture. He also took shares in the Nile Steam Navigation Company and lost £155,000 therein.”¹

These facts are not brought out in the Cave Report, because the money thus lost in a legitimate enterprise and not squandered had nothing to do with an analysis of the contents of Ismail's portfolio, with an appraisal of his liquid assets and with an estimate of his receipts and assured income. But because bankers, though they may have hearts of marble, are concerned in having an insight into the moral risk presented by the applicant for credit, Sir Stephen Cave did not hesitate to write :—

“ These statistics show that the country has made great progress in every way under its present ruler.”²

Such language agrees absolutely with what the American Consul-General wrote in his confidential report to Washington on 15th December, 1873. Mr. Beardsley there said :—

“ It is true that much money has been spent, perhaps much of it unnecessarily, but the accomplished results must be considered and the country must not be forgotten. At any moment Egypt can recover herself by stopping her extraordinary expenses on public works and internal improvements and practising ordinary economy. But she continues to press on the path of progress, and that path has always been found to be an expensive one in all countries. From the cataracts to the sea, there is hardly a city or province but what has received and is still receiving permanent and substantial benefits from the Government.”³

¹ Mulhall, *op. cit.*, p. 531.

² Cave Report, *op. cit.*, p. 392

³ Archives, American Legation, Cairo, Official Correspondence, United States, 1869-1873, p. 468.

The Cave Commission envisaged for Egypt an equally roseate future, for its very last sentence reads :—

“ We gather from all the information that we have been able to obtain, Egypt is well able to bear the charge of the whole of her present indebtedness at a reasonable rate of interest ; but she cannot go on renewing floating debts at 25 per cent, and raising fresh loans at 12 or 13 per cent interest to meet these additions to her debt, which do not bring in a single piastre to her Exchequer.”¹

The corollary which flows from all these facts is that the Cave Report, which Lord Cromer quotes to prove that Ismail “squandered” £91,000,000, does not support his sweeping statement. His point of view, as a child of his forebears, made it impossible for him to credit Ismail’s account with anything which had not a market value. Those canals and bridges escaped him. But, never having been a banker himself, having begun life as a soldier, and afterwards become an administrator, his atavism failed to tell him how to analyse a balance-sheet. He thus overlooked the fact that the figures given by the Cave Report did not mean that Ismail had “squandered” a farthing. What they made available to Baring of Baring Brothers, and not to the soldier and the diplomatist, was that the sums borrowed went into building canals and bridges, into fighting for freedom against slavery, into sending Gordon and Chaillé-Long and Mason and Chippendale and Wall to explore the sources of the Nile, into carrying on those expensive wars in Abyssinia, and into other things, of which more anon.

¹ Cave Report, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

The saddest feature of all this is that practically all, if not all, of these canals now form an important link in the irrigation system of Egypt. Thousands of acres of the most productive lands of Egypt are at present watered by them. The great bridge which spanned the Nile at Cairo and on which Ismail expended at least £105,000 was demolished in 1931, not because it was not serviceable, but because the march of progress and the advent of the motor-car had made it too narrow for the requirements of the future. We do not know how many of the other 429 bridges built by Ismail are still paying silent tribute to his memory. It would be useless to consult statistics. Such details would merely complicate matters. The essential point is stressed by the fact that the bridge which carried Milner and Colvin and Cromer day by day to the Khedivial (now the Gezira) Sporting Club was erected by Ismail, and that neither they nor the Cave Commission remembered that fact when they spoke of his expenditures.

CHAPTER IX

AVERTING A FINANCIAL CRISIS

FREQUENT mention has been made of Consul-General Beardsley's official report to the American State Department. It is quite a lengthy document. Its very last sentence is :—

“ I have endeavoured in this report to indicate the nature and extent of the great benefits conferred upon the country by His Highness's reign, benefits which are not to be estimated in dollars and cents and which will remain as monuments to his genius after he shall have passed away.”¹

The American representative accredited to Ismail forgot that

“ The evil that men do lives after them ;

The good is oft interred with their bones.”

But if he thus went astray in assuming that the Viceroy had prepared for the edification of posterity an indestructible “ moral principle ” balance-sheet, he wrote into his dispatch this summing-up of Ismail's achievements :—

“ This report has grown to an inordinate length, but the remarkable progress made by Egypt during the past ten years is, aside from the general interest of the subject, worthy at this moment of more than ordinary attention, because three great results of

¹ Archives American Legation, Cairo, Egypt, Official Correspondence, 1869-1873, p. 469.

interest to all Christianity seem to be presaged by it, first, the civilization of Central Africa ; second, the suppression of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery ; and third, the modification of the religious and social dogmas of the East. If His Highness Ismail Pasha lives and reigns another decade, these results will, in a great measure, be attained.”¹

If Consul-General Beardsley felt called upon in his summary to speak of “ the great benefits conferred upon the country by His Highness’s reign, benefits which are not to be estimated in dollars and cents ”, in the body of his report he developed a wider theme and referred to what Ismail had done for international shipping. He said :—

“ With the exception of the lighthouse at Alexandria which has recently been greatly improved, all the lighthouses on the Egyptian coast have been built within the last ten years. There are now seven first-class lighthouses on the Mediterranean Coast and five on the Red Sea Coast, while three new ones are being built on the former, and one on the latter coast.”²

The American report was submitted in 1873. It thus confirms what Mulhall wrote in his paper on *Egyptian Finance*, published in the October, 1882, issue of the *Contemporary Review*. It will be recalled that the magazine article fixes the total expenditure for the construction of these lighthouses at £188,000.³ But neither these figures nor the Beardsley pages speak of the heavy expenses which were incurred before these lighthouses could be built. The cost referred

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 467.

² *Ibid.*, p. 438.

³ Mulhall, *Contemporary Review*, October, 1882, p. 529.

to covers actual construction work. It does not apply to preliminary surveys.

One example will suffice to bring out the extent of these preparatory labours. On 29th March, 1878, General Stone, Ismail's American Chief of Staff, ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Graves to take command of an expedition for the survey of Cape Guardafui and of the adjacent coast.

"The object of this reconnaissance," wrote the American from Massachusetts to his fellow-countryman from Georgia, "is to determine the most suitable place for the construction of a lighthouse destined to add to the security of vessels entering the Gulf of Aden from the Indian Ocean, and, once this location shall have been determined, to make a preliminary survey of the spot."

Another paragraph in these instructions reads :—

"You are not unaware of the fact that during the past year three big steamers were lost off Cape Guardafui, and that the inhabitants of that region are most ferocious and inclined to pillage shipwrecked vessels. These people are naturally ill-disposed to permit the building of a lighthouse. Such a work would deprive them of a source of revenue. You will therefore consider, in preparing your data, ways and means by which the Government may establish in that neighbourhood an army post which will protect the engineers and labourers who will build the lighthouse and which will subsequently safeguard the lighthouse-keepers and their stores." ¹

This means that if Ismail's books showed entries

¹ *Bulletin de la Société Khédiviale de Géographie*, Nos. 9 and 10, Août et Novembre, 1880, Le Caire, 1881, p. 29.

totalling £188,000 for building lighthouses, this figure does not cover that expensive organization which made possible the purely constructive work. It took highly trained engineers to look after the preliminary surveys. It required men of superior calibre to do so in the face of unfriendly brigands. Such talent costs money. Its employment entails a permanent expense in the shape of a relatively heavy pay-roll.

Dealing with another subject, Viscount Milner writes :—

“ Over and above the millions wasted in entertainments, in largess, in sensuality, in the erection of numerous palaces—structurally as rotten as they are æsthetically abominable—he threw away yet other millions upon a vast scheme of agricultural development, started with inadequate knowledge at inordinate cost.

“ When with the close of the American War the fall in the price of cotton threatened to sweep away the foundation of Egypt's sudden but precarious prosperity, Ismail conceived the notion of recouping the loss by the production of sugar on an enormous scale. The idea was in itself a good one. But undertaken as Ismail undertook it, the new form of cultivation proved, at the outset, a gigantic failure. A whole countryside—part, by the way, of the vast estates which the Khedive confiscated from their rightful owners and cultivated by forced labour—was turned into a sugar plantation. Twelve large factories were started, and supplied with the most costly machinery, much of which was never used. The whole system was wasteful and unintelligent to a degree which

is past belief. But the crimes and follies, colossal as the Pyramids or Temple of Karnak, which belong to that epoch of financial madness, need not detain us here."¹

If these "crimes and follies need not detain" the reader of *England in Egypt*, because he is learning of "the means by which Egypt is, at length, escaping from those consequences", they must perforce arrest the attention of the present reader, because the existence of "these crimes and follies" is now being challenged.

The first count in this Milner indictment is a pin-prick. It is that the numerous palaces were "structurally as rotten as they are æsthetically abominable". The criterion of the constructive soundness of these numerous palaces is thus their æsthetic beauty. They are, it is true, hideous piles of brick and mortar, but the dominant taste in architecture between 1860 and 1890 was bad all over the world. These buildings are no worse, from the standpoint of art, than are thousands of contemporary public structures scattered throughout Europe and America. Those that have been kept in repair are still serving to-day. Most of those that have disappeared have been either demolished, or deliberately stripped of their convertible material for use in other State buildings. There may be a few which were "structurally as rotten as they are æsthetically abominable", but the language used is far too sweeping to apply to these edifices as a whole.

The outstanding item in the bill of particulars

¹ Milner, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

of the "crimes and follies" is that Ismail "threw away yet other millions upon a vast scheme of agricultural development, started with inadequate knowledge at inordinate cost". In other words, Viscount Milner speaks of "throwing away", when the Earl of Cromer refers to "squandering". The two terms have the same meaning. They are synonymous. Both of them have been used with equal sincerity and with equal defiance of analysis. The facts in regard to the millions "thrown away" by Ismail upon a vast scheme of agricultural development may be thus summarized.

When that sovereign came to the throne in January, 1863, the American Civil War was in full swing. The ports of the Southern Confederacy were blockaded. Every able-bodied white male between the ages of 14 and 55 in the eleven States which had seceded was under arms. No race in the history of the world has ever fought more valiantly than did those boys, those men, those greybeards whom Lee, Jackson, and Beauregard led from 1861 to 1865. The heroism of these troops meant that the South produced but little cotton during four long years. The vigilance of the navy of the North kept all but a fractional part of this curtailed output from reaching the open market. And these factors begot the circumstance that the cotton produced by Egypt became worth its weight in gold.

The corollary to all this was that practically every available acre in the Nile Valley was devoted to cotton. Sugar was neglected. Cereals were not planted. The fields were covered with white bulbs and every *fellah* dreamed in terms of cotton. We shall add no footnotes

to the text to support this statement. It would be pedantry to do so. Human nature is the same all over the world, and these Egyptians were like all other farmers. They sought to get rich by selling the staple which America could not supply. And they began doing so when Muhammad Said was still on the throne.

These prices continued throughout 1863, 1864, and 1865. The 1866 market felt the effect of the new American crop, and of the cotton which had been produced during the previous years, but which the Northern navy had prevented from leaving the South. The result was a break in quotations. But the Egyptian *fellah* was reluctant to put back into sugar, wheat, maize, and clover *feddans* that had brought forth gold for five fat years. The result was a serious economic condition.

Lord Milner criticized Ismail because "a whole countryside was turned into a sugar plantation". The Viceroy may have been mistaken. He made mistakes, and plenty of them, because he was an active man who did things. But it does not follow that "he threw away" money because he met a serious financial cataclysm by heroic methods. He reasoned somewhat along these lines :—

"The bottom has fallen out of cotton prices. There is a world crisis in cotton which I cannot correct. The Suez Canal will be opened in 1870, or perhaps sooner. If I can breach the intervening months by intensive sugar culture I shall get my country out of this gulf of cotton depression. I shall probably be able to establish a manufacturing industry which will pay. When that Canal is open I can feed the

East with refined sugar. That waterway means prosperity to Egypt. If I can put a few millions into the creation of this new enterprise :

"(1) I shall have reduced cotton cultivation to a proper output,

"(2) I shall have started a manufacturing enterprise that may bring in big dividends some day, and

"(3) I shall have bridged the interval between the prosperity born of the American Civil War and that era of riches which is bound to be begotten by de Lesseps and his Canal."

Every point thus made may perhaps be fallacious. But is it fair to accuse Ismail of "throwing away" millions, in the sense given by Lord Milner to this term, even if this explanation be untenable? America to-day has its Reconstruction Finance Corporation. It is furnishing millions to attempt to stem the tide of economic unrest. Congress is ordering the construction of mammoth public works, partly because they are necessary, but largely because they give employment to labour. Agriculture is pleading with President Roosevelt to help it. If it be shown, fifty years from now, that these public works and "this vast scheme of agricultural development [were] started with inadequate knowledge at inordinate cost", will not the historian of that day be inclined to be lenient in his criticism of President Roosevelt if the results obtained be at all proportionate with the outlay?

But before applying to Ismail's activities in sugar the test of the results which can now be measured, it may be well to give concrete figures for Lord Milner's "other millions". Mulhall's article on

Egyptian Finance contains this reference to the subject :—

"Sugar-mills—£6,100,000. Built 64 with machinery, etc."¹

The very next page reads :—

"As regards the sugar factories, of which Ismail built 16 with 4 mills to each,² there was a lavish waste of money, the whole of the Daira loans going in this way. Only half the mills have been kept at work, even partially, and it may be safely stated that the total value of the sugar-factories to the country is under £2,000,000."³

It follows from these figures that Mulhall estimates that over £4,000,000 was lost on sugar. But he also says that "the whole of the Daira loans" went into sugar. This shows how a part of the £91,000,000 which Lord Cromer affirms was "squandered", was really "thrown away" in attempting to put an end, or, to be more accurate, in putting an end to an economic crisis, and in establishing, as will shortly be shown, Egypt's outstanding industry of to-day. The reason that this loss attained such proportions is, perhaps, explained by this statement contained in the Cave Report :—

"Immense sums are expended on unproductive works after the manner of the East, and on productive works carried out in the wrong way or too soon. This last is a fault which Egypt shares with other new countries (for she may be considered a new country in this respect), a fault which has seriously embarrassed

¹ *Egyptian Finance*, by M. G. Mulhall, *The Contemporary Review*, October, 1882, p. 529.

² $16 \times 4 = 64$. The first figures given by Mulhall apply to "mills".

³ *Ibid.*, p. 539.

both the United States and Canada ; but probably nothing in Egypt has ever approached the profligate expenditure which characterized the commencement of the railway system in England." ¹

The Beardsley report gives no figures in regard to sugar. It says :—

"Among the commercial products of Egypt, sugar stands next in importance to cotton. The last few years have witnessed a remarkable development in the production of this article, and the stimulus being given to this branch of industry by His Highness the Khedive is an assurance of its still greater development in the future." ²

Ismail did his utmost to sell to the Turkish Government a considerable proportion of the output of his sugar refineries. A report made upon this subject by Abraham Bey, dated Constantinople, February, 1869, ³ throws light upon this subject. These negotiations came to nought, but "baksheesh", the stumbling-block of the Orient, appears to have been the cause of this setback. Proof will not be adduced to justify this statement. Evidence of its correctness will, however, flow from the facts which will be established in subsequent chapters. But years passed, and to-day this sugar industry is in a flourishing condition. It is not only prosperous, but gives employment to thousands of factory hands, and is easily the outstanding manufacturing enterprise of Egypt.

Not only was Egypt's economic welfare given a body blow by the drop in the price of cotton brought

¹ McCoan, *op. cit.*, p. 384.

² Archives American Legation, Cairo, Egypt, Official Correspondence, 1869-1873, p. 450.

³ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo.

about by the termination of the American War, but a cattle plague also played havoc with the agricultural life of the country. Lady Duff Gordon wrote under date of Tuesday, 20th October, 1863 :—

“ Everything is almost doubled in price, owing to the cattle murrain and the high Nile. Such an inundation as this year’s was never known before. Does the blue god resent Speke’s intrusion on his privacy ? But the damage to crops, and even to last year’s stacks of grains and beans, is frightful—one sails away among the palm trees, over the submerged cotton fields.

“ Ismail Pasha has been very active, but there have been as many calamities in his short reign as during Pharaoh’s, and ill-luck makes a man unpopular. The cattle murrain is fearful, and is now beginning in Cairo and Upper Egypt. I hear the loss reckoned at twelve millions sterling in cattle. The gazelles in the desert have it too, but not horses, asses, or goats.”¹

In 1863 the world knew nothing of modern methods of fighting this cattle pest. The result was that it went on for years. If Ismail could not stamp it out by applying the means now known to veterinary science, he did his duty as he saw it by putting his purse at the disposal of the cattle owners. His budget for the year 1873-4 shows that during the several years preceding those days he paid out in indemnities an aggregate sum of £3,837,562.²

¹ *Letters from Egypt, 1863-65*, by Lady Duff Gordon, London (Macmillan and Co.), 1865, p. 114.

² *Notes sur le Budget Egyptien pendant l’année 1873-1874 avec documents à l’appui*, Henry Oppenheim, Paris (Imprimerie et Librairie administrative de Paul Dumont), 1874, p. 44.

These figures assume mammoth proportions. They are official. They show that to avert the economic and agricultural disaster which menaced Egypt, Ismail went down into his pocket for a considerable sum which may not be entitled to appear in the Cave Report, but which cannot be deleted from a "moral principle" balance-sheet.

If this sum of £3,837,562 was thus paid out as a result of the ravages of that cattle disease called in the budget "epizooty", but which Lady Duff Gordon designates as "murrain", Ismail also agreed to indemnify the cotton merchants who had advanced money to the *fellaheen* and who found themselves unable to collect a penny when the market broke. Here is the entry carried in the Egyptian Budget, when analysed in 1874 by Henry Oppenheim :—

"Reimbursement to European creditors of loans made to villagers which these villagers cannot pay on account of the fall in the price of cotton, £1,274,221."¹

Ismail did not pay out this sum. It was made payable in ten instalments, beginning in 1890. The sum is carried as part of his floating indebtedness.

Other entries also figure in this Oppenheim recapitulation, such as—

"Vessels bought or constructed by the present government, including repairs and remodelling, etc., £1,350,171; ground purchased in Cairo and Alexandria for carrying out sanitary improvements and for beautifying those cities, £1,390,195; and capital and interest due to the Widows and Orphans Home of the Medjidié Society by the former government and converted into bonds payable from and

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

after January, 1868, and entirely amortized, £553,334."

There is another item mentioned in these Oppenheim "notes" on the Egyptian budget which merits attention. It is thus expressed :—

"Debts of the old government to foreign merchants and employees, £2,754,352."¹

This appears to prove that in addition to his bonded indebtedness of £3,300,000 known officially as the Goschen loan of 1862, Muhammad Said left a floating debt of £2,754,352 which is included in the money paid out during the reign of Ismail.

All the figures which have been crowded into this chapter need recapitulation. They are budget entries taken from contemporary source material, and represent items which do not appear in the Cave Report, largely because Sir Stephen Cave centred his attention upon enumerating assets that had a collateral or market value. Here are the amounts already referred to in this chapter :—

	£
Aggregate cost of sugar-mills	6,100,000
Cost of fighting cattle pest	3,837,562
Indemnity paid to cotton merchants	1,274,221
Cost of land for municipal improvements in Cairo and Alexandria	1,390,195
Investment in ships	1,350,171
Widows' and Orphans' Home	553,334
Floating debts of Muhammad Said	2,754,352
Total	<u>£17,259,835</u>

These figures lead up to the amount spent on

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 43 and 44.

education. The Cave Report speaks in flattering terms of what Ismail did in that field. It says :—

“ Education has been carefully attended to, the number of schools established on a European model having been increased from 185 in 1862 to 4,817 in 1875. In the latter year there were 4,817 schools with 6,048 masters and 140,977 pupils, being an augmentation on the previous year of 1,072 schools, 1,615 masters, and 27,722 pupils. The quality of the education given necessarily varies, but it has on the whole decidedly improved, and is, in some cases, of a very superior character.”¹

The American Consular report says upon the same subject :—

“ In my dispatch No. 59 on 25th January, 1873, I had the honour to allude to the conditions of public instruction in Egypt, which has been so nobly encouraged by His Highness the Khedive and which is of such vital importance to the welfare of the country.”

After quoting statistics to support this statement, Mr. Beardsley adds :—

“ The obstacles in the way of public education are, however, great and exceptional in Egypt. Among the 89,893 scholars in the primary schools there are only 3,018 girls, all or most of whom are of non-Musulman families ; this one-half of the population of Egypt is or has been until now beyond the influence of education, it being one of the social dogmas of the East that women are not worthy of the blessings of education. A favourable change, involving an entire revolution of oriental ideas, appears to be guaranteed for the near future. Breaking through

¹ Cave Report, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

the secular prejudices of the country, which have not even the excuse or sanction of religious dogma, the Khedive has resolved that the future women of Egypt shall not be deprived of the blessings of education. By his orders the instruction of girls is receiving the most careful attention of his government."¹

The statistics quoted by the American Consul-General and those cited by the Cave Commission vary from one another, and both disagree with the official figures found in the returns made by the Egyptian Government for the same years. This divergence grows out of the fact that Mr. Beardsley speaks of schools, Sir Stephen Cave of "schools established on a European model", and the Government publication of the "civil schools of the Egyptian Government".

But such details mean nothing. The essential factor is that all three show that Ismail was doing his utmost to educate the children of his country: the great jump forward from 185 schools in 1862 to 4,817 in 1875 meant a heavy outlay. It is inconceivable that the physical equipment for so rapid an expansion could be met out of current revenues. No municipality or state government in America could have faced such a programme without imposing a special tax or without a bond issue. Unfortunately, the accounts of the Egyptian Government prior to 1876 throw no positive light upon this question. All that can be done is to enter this quotation from Mulhall's *Egyptian Finance* :—

"Ismail established 4,632 public schools, under Messrs. Dor and Rogers, with 5,850 teachers, whose

¹ Archives American Legation, Cairo, Egypt, Official Correspondence, 1869-1873, p. 432.

salaries ranged from £24 to £84 per annum : the outlay under this head reaching £3,600,000 during his reign." ¹

De Leon says :—

"Fully to relate all that the Khedive has done for education would require a volume instead of a chapter, for his efforts in this direction are worthy of all praise, so much has he already accomplished within the past six or eight years. . . . But the greatest innovation is the attempt to educate the native women which, under the auspices of one of the Khedive's wives, has been attempted on a considerable scale : and with very remarkable success thus far. Miss Whately and the American missionaries had been making a similar attempt previously, but the natural dread of the ignorant and fanatical natives, that the religious faith of their children would be tampered with by Christian teachers, restricted the benefit of their efforts chiefly to the children, male and female, of the native Christians. But when the wife of the Khedive took the matter in hand, it was a very different thing, for royal patronage goes as far in Egypt as in most enlightened countries." ²

Not only did the Khedive have to fight against prejudice to induce the rank and file of his subjects to permit him to educate their daughters, but it was hard work to get them to allow even their sons to go to school. McCoan brings out this fact when, after quoting various figures dealing with expenditure, he adds :—

"True it is that much of this amount is absorbed .

¹ Mulhall, *Contemporary Review*, October, 1882, p. 351.

² De Leon, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

by the board and clothing of pauper pupils, and so does not represent outlay on pure teaching ; but without such bribes of free living, few or none of those who benefit by it could be lured to education at all.”¹

With all these facts thus stressed it is easy to follow Mulhall's reasoning when he writes :—

“ Whatever his faults, he [Ismail] raised Egypt in the scale of nations, as will be seen in the following table :—

“ PROGRESS OF EGYPT IN SEVENTEEN YEARS

	<i>Last year of Said Pasha 1862</i>	<i>Last year of Ismail Pasha 1879</i>
“ Acres Tilled	4,052,000	5,425,000
“ Value of Imports	£1,991,000	£5,410,000
“ Value of Exports	£4,454,000	£13,810,000
“ Revenue	£4,930,000	£8,562,000
“ Public Debt	£3,300,000	£98,540,000
“ Number of Public Schools .	185	4,817
“ Miles Railways.	275	1,185
“ Miles Telegraphs	630	5,820
“ Miles Canals	44,000	52,400
“ Population	4,833,000	5,518,000” ²

¹ McCoan, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

² Mulhall, *op. cit.*, p. 531.

CHAPTER X

ABRAHAM BEY

As soon as Ismail had put his relations with the Canal company upon a proper basis, he devoted his attention to weakening, if not severing, the bonds which still held Egypt under vassalage to Turkey. "The experience of Muhammad Ali had shown that this severance could not be effected by force of arms," writes Dicey; "and though there is no reason to suppose that Ismail was wanting in courage, an appeal to the God of Battles was not in accordance with his character. Knowing, however, the financial straits of the Ottoman Empire, and the venality of almost all of her public men, he came to the conclusion that he could secure by the power of the purse, what his grandfather had failed to obtain by the power of the sword."¹

The point of view thus accentuated by an author who is by no means friendly to Ismail merits attention. It stresses the fact that the Viceroy was determined to free Egypt from the Ottoman yoke and that he elected to use his purse, rather than his sword, as his main reliance. If he spent hundreds of thousands of pounds in thus emancipating Egypt from Turkish suzerainty, the money so disbursed should be looked upon as a war measure. The expense should be gauged in the light of what a series of military campaigns

¹ *The Story of the Khedivate*, by Edward Dicey, London (Rivington), 1902, p. 57.

would have cost. And the moral principle of taking advantage of Ottoman venality should be weighed with reference to the old saying : " All's fair in love and war."

Shortly after Ismail's accession, Sultan Abdul Aziz visited Egypt. " The records of the private relations between the suzerain and the vassal state," records the same author, " are not accessible to research. I should doubt whether any such records are in existence. The transactions which passed between the occupants of the Imperial and the vice-regal thrones . . . were not of a kind to give either party to the bargain any interest in preserving written records. Money passed hands, and as soon as the consideration for its transfer was forthcoming, the less said, and still less written, the better for both seller and buyer." ¹

While there may be no answer to this logic of *The Story of the Khedivate*,

" There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

Kismet thus decreed that though author after author may call Ismail a prodigal and say that he " threw away " his money and " squandered " £91,000,000, official records are now available which demonstrate that he carefully preserved an elaborate correspondence showing how he spent thousands and thousands of pounds in his pacific war for the liberation of Egypt. These archives do not account for any such specific sum as that just mentioned. But they deal with fancy figures, and bring out how a great deal of Ismail's money disappeared.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

No attempt will be made to pass judgement upon the moral issue involved in this expenditure except to insist that the gold went into munitions of war. The maxim "the end justifies the means" will not be invoked. A question, however, will be asked. It is this : "Was the game worth the candle?"

This "candle" took several forms. Its first phase developed shortly after the visit paid by the Sultan to Cairo. Secret negotiations were then undertaken to procure a modification in the order of succession to the viceregal sceptre. The firman of 1841 made this dignity hereditary in the family of Muhammad Ali, but applied the Islamic principle of primogeniture. This means, as has already been explained, that the crown passed, not to the next male heir in direct descent, but to the eldest surviving descendant of the founder of the dynasty.

There is nothing arbitrary about this Muslim principle. It is explained by the fact that the whole political and social organization of the Ottoman Empire was based upon the theory that the welfare of the State required that the head of the community, tribe, or family should always be a full-grown man able to defend the interests committed to him. Salutary as this rule may be, it had obvious disadvantages which were emphasized by the fact that Islam sanctions polygamy. The practical result of this system was that the rivalry between the different mothers of the imperial household caused brothers to hate one another and encouraged assassinations. Ambition sharpened daggers that might never have been drawn had a different rule of primogeniture obtained.

In the ordinary course of nature, a son can count

upon succeeding his father. But in the case of brothers presumably about the same age and born of mothers who may hate one another, the chance of the younger succeeding the elder is so slight that a "cup of coffee" may offer an irresistible temptation. There is no ground for believing that Ismail had any cause to apprehend that an attempt might be made upon his life, but statesmanship prompted him to desire to establish a line of succession more in harmony with modern conditions than the rule then prevailing.

The Sublime Porte was reluctant to yield to his request. It invoked the impossibility of scrapping a tradition which it said was inviolable. It finally, however, agreed to listen to reason provided that the annual Egyptian tribute was increased from £400,000 to £750,000. It thus follows that the introduction of a reform of distinct value to Egypt cost the Viceroy a yearly charge of £350,000.

No undue stress is laid upon this sum, for the very obvious reason that Lord Cromer, Lord Milner, and all the critics of Ismail credit his account with this outlay. They do not include this sum in the money "squandered" or "thrown away".

Dicey records that—

"Fuad Pasha, who as Grand Vizir had accompanied the Sultan [to Cairo], was offered and accepted without demur a present of £60,000 from Ismail for the services he had, or was supposed to have, rendered in establishing friendly relations between the Sultan and the Viceroy."¹

The author of *The Story of the Khedivate* cites no authority for his statement. We have not checked

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

its accuracy. All that can be affirmed with certainty is that the imperial firman changing the order of succession was promulgated on 27th March, 1866. This *irade* was followed by another dated 8th June, 1867, in which a large measure of autonomy was given to the Viceroy and the title of Khedive conferred upon him.

Did the "Fuad Pasha" of that day receive a present for facilitating the promulgation of this second decree? Dicey does not throw any specific light upon the subject. He does point out, however, that it was not idle vanity that prompted Ismail's desire to procure a high-sounding title. He writes :—

"My personal acquaintance with Ismail, an acquaintanceship which lasted long after his exile, led me to the conclusion that whatever his other failings may be, he was not a person to attach an exaggerated value to the externals of royalty, or indeed to any of its attributes, other than the power and wealth attaching to its exercise. . . . Whether at home or abroad, in Turkey or Egypt, or even in Africa, he could brook no rival near his throne; and I take it, therefore, that a certain solid advantage attached, at any rate in his opinion, to the distinction between his being officially described as a Khedive instead of as a Viceroy."¹

The truth of the matter is that, just as Disraeli knew the East and saw the wisdom of making his Queen Empress of India, so did Ismail understand his part of the world and recognize the need of drawing a distinction between his rank and that of the other Turkish viceroys. He and the Sultan appear to have

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

had great difficulty in finding the proper title. Ismail desired to be called "El Aziz", which signifies the All-Powerful, one of the many names of Allah. But the then reigning Turkish sovereign was Abd-el-Aziz, and that fact proved an insuperable objection. The designation "Khedive" was finally chosen. It is a Persian adjective derived from the noun "Khiva", a Persian name for God. It thus means godly or divine. As neither the Egyptians nor the Turks speak Persian the word had the charm of mystery about it. It thus satisfied the Sultan because he persuaded himself that it meant nothing; and it pleased Ismail because he led himself to believe that it implied everything.

Encouraged by the autonomy which this second firman conferred upon him, Ismail set his heart upon reforming the courts of Egypt. There is some question as to whether this idea originated in his mind or in that of his minister, Nubar Pasha. It is really immaterial who first conceived it. There is glory enough for both of them in the judicial system which is now known as that of the Mixed or International Courts of Egypt. These tribunals began operations in February, 1876. They now have more than fifty years of solid achievement behind them. They stand as a monument to the reign of Ismail and to the two men, monarch and minister, who made them possible.

But before this reform could be introduced, Ismail had a long and dreary road to travel. He had to convince Europe and America that his plan was feasible, salutary, and opportune. He had to buy Turkey's consent. Nubar Pasha, diplomatist and delightful conversationalist, keen reasoner and tireless

negotiator, man of the world and friend of statesmen, took charge of persuading the chancelleries of the Occident. He brought to the discharge of his duty a patience that was untiring, a versatility that was bewildering, and a courage that was sublime. But, while he was marshalling the phalanx of righteousness, another representative of Ismail was dealing with other elements which thought in terms of what the Occident calls bribes and what the Orient refers to as *Baksheesh*.

The name of this friend of the Pashas of the Bosphorus is Abraham Bey. He was not a child of Israel, but a son of Armenia. Practically no mention of him appears in manuscripts that work their way into print. He had no press agent, and yet he had many a journalist on his pay-roll. Moberly Bell does not devote a chapter to him in his *Khedives and Pashas*, but the secret files of the period of which the correspondent of *The Times* spoke with such delightful frankness were dominated by this elusive figure. He ruled the Constantinople of the years that followed 1866, but, somehow or other, while he controlled the politics of the Sublime Porte and did not hide his light under a bushel, he managed to escape publicity.

Abraham Bey was not a prince of the underworld. He was a suave intermediary who had "his exits and his entrances" into ministries and palaces. He had a facile pen, and wrote long dispatches to his august master. To these the Khedive replied. These records have not been lost. They reveal facts that tell their own story. They will now be permitted to speak. They do not bear upon the two firmans

already mentioned ; they refer to conditions created by them.

The records of 1866 offer nothing of interest. 1867 and the first months of 1868 do not arrest attention. But a letter from Abraham dated Constantinople, 1st October, 1868, introduces the *dramatis personæ* who will dominate the next two chapters. It speaks of frequent visits to Kourchid Pasha, of His Highness Ali Pasha, of Halim Pasha, and includes this characteristic paragraph :—

“Rumour has it that Mustafa Pasha is not in favour of Halim Pasha. Put no faith in this story. He assumes an apparent neutral attitude when in the presence of Ministers, but under cover he is working for Halim Pasha. Not knowing that Saïdi Bey is pledged to us, Mustafa Pasha has offered him money to hand over to the chamberlains of the Sultan in order to get them to cause the Sultan to receive Halim Pasha.”¹

It is not until 22nd December, 1868, is reached that the information revealed by the Abraham files begins to take concrete shape. It is then disclosed that this man of mystery was stationed at Constantinople, that £1,265 per month was placed at his disposal as petty cash, and that he had authority to draw drafts for amounts in excess of this sum.² But nothing of any moment turns up until a letter of 16th February, 1869, announces that Khalil Bey will probably shortly be made Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that he is trying to sell his properties, that he would like to dispose of them to the Khedive, and that if this is impossible he will

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, 1st October, 1868.

² *Ibid.*, 22nd December, 1868.

be constrained to hypothecate them to Mustafa Pasha. The significance of this language becomes evident on 2nd March, when Abraham telegraphed to Cairo that Khalil Bey asks for a loan of £5,000 payable when he sells his real estate.¹

No light is thrown upon the result of this request for a loan, but 16th March provides this note from Paris. It is signed Pierre Baragnon, who styles himself "Newspaper editor, managing-owner of the International Diplomatic Bulletin, former director of the Ottoman Printing-press and of the Journal of Constantinople". The first paragraph of the communication of the gentleman who thus introduces himself reads :—

"I write to you to request that you be so kind as to let me know at what bank in Egypt or Paris I may collect my annual pension of £600 which I owe to the munificence of His Highness Said Pasha and which has been paid by His Highness, Khedive Ismail. The last three instalments have not been paid, but, notwithstanding this fact, never for a day have I suspended my work in Paris."²

Other journalists were equally insistent. On 12th July, 1871, E. Kyriacopoulo wrote :—

"The object of these lines is to request you to order that the subsidy of £300 *per annum* which His Highness agreed to pay to the *Phare du Bosphore*, and which has not been paid since the first of March, 1870, be remitted to me. I ask you to issue the necessary orders assuring the regular payment to me of £25 per month."³

¹ *Ibid.*, 16th February, 1889.

² *Ibid.*, 16th March, 1889.

³ *Ibid.*, 14th June, 1871.

Two days later a newspaper man with an English name wrote to Abraham telling him that the owners of the *Levant Times* had fallen out with one another, that the writer of the letter had been badly treated by his partner, and that the publication itself was threatened with insolvency. "But," said this gentleman, "I hope, with the assistance of Your Excellency, to be able to continue to issue the paper. In asking for £500 or £600, I feel that I am submitting a modest request."

A telegram to Abraham from Cairo, dated 30th June, authorized him to pay £500 to the *Levant Herald*.¹ To this wire he answered in a cable addressed to the Khedive :—

"Editor now wants a subsidy of 20,000 francs *per annum* (£800) and a guarantee of five years. He also says that he is obligated to a 'go-between' for £200. I have given no undertaking. This journalist cannot compromise me. I await the orders of my august master."²

This evoked the following reply, dated 4th July :—

"I knew that he would act foolishly. I have given Riaz Pasha instructions to pay the subsidy of the "*Phare du Bosphore*". For the £200 asked for by the 'go-between' and for the other disbursements which you may have to make, I am sending you a draft on Menascé Sons, of Constantinople, for £10,000 for which you will account when you get back to Egypt."³

There are many other instances of the same character, which will not be cited. One of them, however, cannot be overlooked. It is a letter dated 26th July, 1871,

¹ *Ibid.*, 30th June, 1871. ² *Ibid.*, 3rd July, 1871. ³ *Ibid.*, 4th July, 1871.

and addressed to the Khedive. In it the other partner of the *Levant Times* is reported by Abraham to have given him a detailed account of the dispute between the two owners of that journal and to have furnished him with some very interesting inside information about Constantinople politics. One of the paragraphs of this lengthy dispatch reads :—

“After this discourse, which I faithfully report to my august master, we reached the question of the subsidy. We came to terms, but he wanted a year’s payment in advance. I did my best to break down his insistence. I tried to compromise upon an anticipated payment of six months, but he would not yield. I finished by giving in, because I was afraid that he might refuse to go ahead unless I did so. I therefore paid him a year in advance, but stipulated that thereafter the subsidy will be granted but six months in advance.”¹

This implies that Ismail, recognizing the fact that he was at war with Turkey and that his sword was not one of steel but of gold, had his propaganda thoroughly organized. He appealed to public opinion, to the public opinion of the Occident and the Orient, through a subsidized press. It cost him many hundreds of pounds a year to get his facts before the world under a Constantinople date line. The “candle”, for which so much money was expended, was that of judicial reform and of Egyptian autonomy.

One of the first problems with which Ismail had to cope was the issue born of the decree which changed the order of the succession to the throne. This modification, it may be well to repeat, while in

¹ *Ibid.*, 26th July, 1871.

thorough harmony with modern conceptions, cost Ismail the payment of an increased subsidy of £350,000 a year. This sum appears to have satisfied the Ottoman exchequer, but it carried no message to the man who saw himself despoiled of his heritage in favour of Ismail's children. The disappointed next-of-kin began to frown. He had a strong argument in the fact that the innovation flew in the face of Islamic tradition. He had friends at Court. He had partizans in Egypt. He was, at all events potentially, a most dangerous adversary. He was the Halim Pasha referred to in that initial letter written by Abraham and dated 1st October, 1868.

This opening note, whose terms it may not be amiss to repeat, said :—

“ Rumour has it that Mustafa Pasha is not in favour of Halim Pasha. Put no faith in this story. He assumes an apparent neutral attitude when in the presence of Ministers, but under cover he is working for Halim Pasha.”

In other words, when Abraham entered this narrative, Ismail had his firman securing to his son the Khedivial sceptre, but Halim Pasha was not taking his elimination supinely. On the contrary, the excluded heir was seeking to undermine the Khedive's authority, and had the influential Mustafa Pasha working for him. Abraham's first important task was to thwart the intrigues of reaction. His efforts, and Ismail's purse, were dedicated to the cause of progress. He had to fight Mustafa Pasha, but it would appear from a report addressed to the Khedive and dated Constantinople, 19th April, 1869, that that Turkish politician sought to be friendly with both Halim

Pasha and Ismail. Here is what Abraham wrote to his sovereign :—

“As soon as I received Your Highness's telegram directing me to apprise Mustafa Pasha that the £25,000 for the construction of his Yali and the £1,500 for the purchase of the parcel surrounded by his estate, making a total of £26,500, would be placed at his disposal, I called upon him and communicated Your Highness's dispatch to him.

“He was delighted, and he directed me, Monseigneur, to convey to you an expression of his sincerest thanks. A few moments later he began to unfold his plans to me. If he carries out what he contemplates doing with this £26,500, £50,000 will not suffice. . . .

“Halim Pasha came to see me, and spoke about the claims that he intends to press and about a sequestration for which he contemplates petitioning. I told him that he was talking sheer nonsense, that he would do better to let me severely alone, and that his talk meant nothing to us.

“Kiámil Pasha told Mustafa Pasha that Halim Pasha is not as exigent as he formerly was, and was now hoping to get £7,000,000 instead of £20,000,000.”¹

Even the lesser of these two figures represents a sum of staggering importance, particularly when one recalls that in 1869, £7,000,000 was a king's ransom. While Ismail was thus brought face to face with what it might eventually cost him to placate Halim Pasha, Abraham set to work to find out why it was that the Turkish politicians and courtiers were so

¹ *Ibid.*, 19th April, 1869.

insistent that they should receive payment in advance and not on delivery. He first referred to the matter in a letter to Ismail dated 7th April, 1870, in which he said :—

“Two days ago I had a talk with the banker of this Minister [Sawfat Pasha]. They are very intimate, and my friend let me know that Sawfat Pasha said to him :—

“‘The other day at the Council of Ministers we defeated the plans of the Viceroy. The Egyptians think that we count for nothing. They are mistaken.’ And he added :—

“‘When they got their two old firmans I was a member of the Council of Ministers that granted them. Obviously, I expected something, but I have seen nothing come my way. I have not even been thanked. But they know that I stood by them. This time I did my duty, and when you see Abraham you may repeat this to him, and add that no one sides with them for nothing.’”¹

Five days later the indefatigable lobbyist was able to write to Ismail more specifically. His letter of 12th April, 1870, conveys this information :—

“I wanted to get first-hand data from the Palace, and I ran up against all kinds of difficulties. Here is the reason :—

“Before the last firman was obtained Kiámil Bey and Hassan Rassim Pasha seemed to have been entrusted with several details and to have promised money to several persons in the event of success. When Nubar came here and finished the business he gave nothing to these persons, and told them that

¹ *Ibid.*, 7th April, 1870.

the Sublime Porte had granted the firman and that nothing was due to them.

"This is why everybody is so very sceptical about us. I have even been told, through Ali Bey, that if I wish to do anything or to know anything, I must pay in advance. I have answered that this I shall never do, and I have said that services are only paid for after they are rendered."¹

This attitude of "cash on delivery", perhaps, explains the telegram sent by Abraham from Constantinople on 14th April, 1870 :—

"Mustafa Pasha and Kiamil Pasha told me yesterday that the Grand Vizir had said to them that Your Highness should pay at least £24,000 a year to Halim Pasha, as he was the only surviving son of Muhammad Ali."²

This message made it clear that Halim Pasha, instead of insisting upon such an enormous cash payment as a sum running from £7,000,000 to £20,000,000, was prepared to do business upon the basis of an annuity. While the Khedive was a very wealthy man in 1870, it would obviously have been very inconvenient for him to have paid out such an amount as £7,000,000 in gold, even if the disbursement had carried with it the cession of property rights as well as the renunciation of political claims. He therefore, probably, read with a sense of relief the contents of this telegraphic message sent from Constantinople on 14th May :—

"Halim Pasha's doctor called upon me to say that the Prince would like to see me. I visited him at his yali, and he submitted to me in writing, through his

¹ *Ibid.*, 12th April, 1870.

² *Ibid.*, 14th April, 1870.

secretary, the following proposition which I have the honour to transmit to Your Highness :—

“ ‘ Being desirous of arriving at a compromise which will be serious, durable, and radical, and desiring to give clear proof of my determination to put an end to the difficulties which now exist and which are not compatible with the high station of our family and are a menace to its peace, and in order to obviate the disagreeable necessity of submitting my numerous claims sooner or later to the judgement of public opinion,

“ ‘ I now declare that I shall sell and do sell to the Khedive all my property in Egypt, that I shall renounce and do renounce all my rights that now exist or which may accrue in my favour, that I abandon all actions at law which may exist between us, and that I recognize the direct line of descent in the family of Ismail, Khedive of Egypt, the whole in consideration of an annual payment of £80,000 sterling for a period of forty years.’ ”¹

Abraham followed up this telegram by two others, one dated 16th May, in which he pointed out that Prince Halim had an audience with the Sultan for an early date and that it was advisable that a prompt answer should be given to the proposition, as this audience might cause the Prince to change his mind. The second wire, sent 20th May, said that Halim was anxious to leave Constantinople, and that Mustafa Pasha was doing his utmost to dissuade the Prince from adhering to the proposal recently made. It added that his doctor would prevent his departure if there was any chance of a settlement.²

¹ *Ibid.*, 14th May, 1870.

² *Ibid.*, 10th and 20th May, 1870.

CHAPTER XI

THE SULTAN AND HIS BIRDS

WHILE Ismail was pondering over this offer which involved £3,200,000 he received this telegram from Abraham :—

“Kiámil Pasha has informed me that the Grand Vizir as well as Mustafa Pasha are doing and will do everything possible to foment discord between His Highness and the Sultan. He suggests that the Khedive come here or that His Highness send his family.”¹

Before the Khedive had replied to this message, Abraham wrote to him:—

“Your Highness has graciously accorded me the favour of a participation of £150,000 in the last Egyptian loan upon the same terms as the concessionnaire. As I have been able to sell the amount of my participation against my undertaking to deliver the provisional documents, may I ask you, Monseigneur, to do me the favour of letting me know to whom I shall pay what I owe in order to receive delivery of the provisional documents?”²

What did the Christian emissary of the Muslim sovereign make out of this transaction? The answer is an interrogation mark. He had not advanced a farthing. This is obvious from his letter. But he

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, 22nd May, 1870.

² *Ibid.*, 24th May, 1870.

was, in the vernacular of Wall Street, "let in on the ground floor and was thus enabled to unload at a profit."

Here a distinction may well be drawn between the terminology of Lord Cromer and that of Lord Milner. It demonstrates that there are no absolute synonyms in the English language, for Ismail did not "squander" the money which Abraham thus made out of him. He merely "threw it away". Did he? Did not the Khedive need just such an "observer" as this tireless Armenian in order to fight fire with fire? There is no evidence that this ubiquitous agent robbed his master. Was it not, therefore, consonant with the ethics of the game which he played that he be given access to the "ground-floor" when loans were made?

Before this question is answered it may be well that another letter be read. Its meaning should be construed in the light of the fact that it was Abraham's mission to know everybody, particularly the right people, and to have them at his beck and call. He cabled thus to Cairo four days after sending the note about the bonds :—

"I have seen Newres Pasha twice since he was chosen first chamberlain, and he has kept all the promises which he made to me before getting this post. He has brought to the knowledge of the Sultan all that we desire and he will take steps to have Kourchid Pasha sent away as far as possible. But his relations with me, for the moment, must be more than circumspect, for should the slightest suspicion arise he would lose his position.

"As he is thus in a ticklish situation, he asks for

£5,000, so that, should he be dismissed, he may be able to pay his most pressing debts.”¹

And here is a letter in which Abraham advised the Khedive that he had just turned down a bribe of £50,000 offered him by Halim Pasha. As a matter of fact this is possibly an exaggeration, as he does not speak of pounds. He merely gives the figure, 50,000. It appears that Prince Halim’s doctor had submitted another proposition on behalf of his patient. Its details are not given. The paragraph which deals with the offer of gold is couched in these words :—

“In so far as the fifty thousand which he offered me are concerned, I replied that the circumstances are no longer what they were, and that at the time I negotiated the Mustafa Pasha matter I did not have the great honour of being in Your Highness’s service: I added that I am now doing nothing but my duty, that he owed me nothing, and that I would accept presents from nobody other than my august master.”²

There appears to be a break in the correspondence between 22nd August, 1870, and 3rd February, 1871. The first item of any interest after the latter date is a telegram dated 9th June, 1871, which reads :—

“Notwithstanding the fact that the Sultan had prohibited Newres Pasha from accepting any presents for him [the Sultan] during his [Newres’] visit to Egypt, the Sultan asked this morning whether Your Highness had sent any other present beside the animals. Newres Pasha, in letting me know this, asked me to come to the Palace and inform him officially what sum Your Highness intends to give as a present

¹ *Ibid.*, 28th May, 1870.

² *Ibid.*, 30th May, 1870.

to the Sultan, so that the figure may be communicated to His Majesty.”¹

To this message the Khedive replied to Abraham by wire :—

“ Answer Newres Pasha in this strain :—

“ ‘ His Excellency having been unwilling to accept anything, His Highness could not presume that you would now accept anything, and I could not foresee that such a request would be made of me and thus have asked for instructions. There is but one way to handle the matter. It is for you to let me know His Majesty’s wishes, so that I may convey them to His Highness, and then, when I have His Highness’s instructions, I shall make them known to you.’ ”²

Two days later this telegram was sent to Ismail :—

“ Newres Pasha told me that he is certain that Your Highness will afford the Sultan pleasure if Your Highness will give £7,500 plus £1,100 for the Imperial suite and ship’s company, and he added that if this is approved I should bring the amount direct to the Palace. . . .

“ Newres Pasha also said that it was understood with Your Highness that when the Princess visits Constantinople she will bring with her precious gifts for the mother of the Sultan. He asks whether these gifts are ready.”³

This message received from the Khedive the following reply :—

“ Orders have been given that the presents intended for the mother of His Majesty will be presented when my daughter has the honour of being admitted to the

¹ *Ibid.*, 9th June, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 10th June, 1871.

³ *Ibid.*, 12th June, 1871.

Palace. But in regard to the £7,500 and the £1,100, my answer is that this is a different question, that my reply will be a long one, and that I have not the time to answer by this mail.”¹

A specific reply to the suggestion about the payment of this aggregate sum of £8,600 was delayed, and on 8th July, Abraham felt called upon to send a message in code to His Highness, in these terms :—

“Newres Pasha sent me word that he wanted to see me at the Palace. As soon as he saw me he went in to see the Sultan, and returning to me he said :—

“ ‘The Sultan directs me to say that he wants you to get him two dogs like those that I brought back from Egypt. Moreover His Majesty would like to have some hens and roosters with black heads and white feathers. If you can arrange this, it will please him a great deal.’ I ask my august master to give me his instructions on this point.

“When I was alone with Newres Pasha I took advantage of the opportunity to speak to him about the money which we are to remit to him. He said to me that it was now too late to do so officially, but that he desired me to give him his share secretly, and that he would be very grateful to Your Highness. He says that we are to do nothing for the ship’s company, but he suggests that a suitable present should be given to Cawadji Pasha. As I left the Palace I called on Hassan Pasha, and we agreed that the £7,500 should be turned over to him secretly on Wednesday next, that nothing should be given the ship’s company, and that a gift of £1,000 should be given Cawadji Pasha in the name of the Princess.

¹ *Ibid.*, 15th June, 1871.

I ask my august master to transmit his orders to me about these matters." ¹

Ismail lost no time in sending his reply to this message. His answer was quite lengthy. Its salient passages read :—

"I am sending you this very day £100,000 sterling for payment to Newres Pasha. I am remitting it in drafts on London endorsed in blank and drawn on leading houses so that they may be discounted by an intermediary without anybody being any the wiser. I have put these drafts into small parcels so that they can be carried about without attracting attention and thus do away with the necessity of making use of an intermediary. . . . I entirely approve of the arrangement you have made with Hassan Pasha for him to remit the £7,500 in secret to Newres Pasha and the £1,000 to Cawadji Pasha, the latter in the name of the Princess. Say to Hassan Pasha that he is to pay these sums without delay." ²

A further message to Abraham, dated 11th July, said :—

"Do me the favour of calling upon Newres Pasha and of telling him that Riaz Pasha left here on Monday afternoon and that he should reach Constantinople on Friday. He is the bearer of 22,500 Turkish purses which represent more than a hundred thousand pounds. They are in a portfolio, and are placed in an envelope which has five seals, just like a registered letter and just as if they were drafts." ³

This dispatch is not as clear as it might be. Does it mean that Ismail sent £100,000 in drafts on 9th July,

¹ *Ibid.*, 8th July, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 9th July, 1871.

³ *Ibid.*, 11th July, 1871.

and another £100,000 (or more) in bank-notes two days later? It really makes little difference as far as these pages are concerned. They deal with millions, and such a bagatelle as £100,000 is a mere passing incident.

As soon as this more or less ambiguous message of 11th July reached Abraham, he wrote a lengthy letter to the Khedive in which he began by telling his august master that the Sultan attached great importance to receiving the hens and roosters with black heads and white feathers, that Newres Pasha would like to have £10,000 for himself, £2,000 for Cawadji Pasha, and £7,500 for Hassan Pasha.¹

There must be a lacuna somewhere, as a dispatch from Abraham to Ismail dated 17th July implies that he is defending himself from some kind of a reproach. His explanations evidently satisfied the Khedive, for Ismail answered in this friendly spirit:—

“I have received your message of 17th July. I note that you fear that I may be angry with you. I am not at all displeased with you, for all that you have done is to discharge your duty with absolute fidelity as a devoted man should do.”²

Abraham's letter of 19th July throws light upon the misunderstanding. It shows that Ismail wanted to be reasonably certain that the Sultan was getting his share of the spoils and that Newres Pasha was not taking them all for himself. The letter runs:—

“I had the extreme honour to communicate to my august master, in my dispatches of the 13th and 17th of this month, all the conversations which I had with Newres Pasha about money matters. I am able

¹ *Ibid.*, 12th July, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 19th July, 1871.

to assure Your Highness that it was not unknown to His Majesty that Newres Pasha took up this money matter with me. The money was for the Sultan himself, and there is no danger of their playing us false.

"Newres Pasha insisted that the matter be kept a profound secret because it was a very delicate subject for them. They were afraid that if one of the Ministers were to get wind of it, it would cause them great humiliation. In fact, the last time that I saw Newres Pasha he said to me :—

" 'How do you think that we could cash drafts for so large an amount? Everybody would see that they came from Egypt. They would have to be cashed by a man attached to the Palace. Great as may be our confidence in an intermediary, it would be known that he was our man. The money should have been sent in another way.' " ¹

Five days passed, and the First Chamberlain, Newres Pasha, again sent for Abraham. This visit brought about the sending of this cablegram to the Khedive :—

"Newres asked me to come to the Palace. I did so. When I got there the Sultan was in the aviary and I found Newres Pasha in an adjoining room. As soon as I entered he was called, and joined me at once. He said :—

" 'The Sultan wanted to know if you had come, and has instructed me to ask you whether Zia Bey or Suavi Effendi had gone to Egypt, whether these gentlemen had called on the Khedive when His Highness was in Europe last year, and whether His

¹ *Ibid.*, 19th July, 1871.

Highness had paid Zia Bey anything beyond the £50,000.' I answered :—

"These gentlemen have never been to Egypt, His Highness did not receive them when in Europe, and I know nothing of the £50,000 of which you speak. . . .

"Newres Pasha here left me to join the Sultan, telling me to wait. A moment later he returned and said that the Sultan had been told that if Zia Bey was not now in Egypt he would shortly go there, and that the Khedive was in the habit of giving money to him and to Suavi Effendi. His Majesty added, continued Newres Pasha, that he was convinced of the devotion and fidelity of the Khedive and would never believe that he had anything to do with these despicable creatures, but should Zia Bey be in Egypt or go there, the Sultan desired that the man be chased out of the country, or better still that he be arrested and sent to Constantinople." ¹

While these conversations were going on between Abraham and the Sultan's chamberlain, and these cablegrams and letters were being exchanged between Ismail and his "observer", the life of the Grand Vizir was nearing its end. The lobbyist followed this death-agony with the keenest interest. He was a Warwick. If he did not make kings he, at all events, appointed Ministers. And the Sultan and all the Pashas of the Bosphorus vied with him in keeping an uninterrupted vigil. It appears that Abdul Aziz sent presents to the doctors who were attending the Vizir, but, wrote Abraham to Ismail :—

"He did so only for the sake of appearances. . . .

¹ *Ibid.*, 24th July, 1871

The Sultan is far from being grieved at the prospect of this loss. On the contrary, he is delighted. He asks every day whether it is all over. There is a great deal of agitation among the Ministers. All of them have their eye on the place of the Grand Vizir, principally Kiámil Pasha, Kebrishi Mehemet Pasha, and Rushdi Mehemet Pasha.

"His Majesty knows nothing of the desires of these personages, but if anything happens to Ali Pasha, the choice of His Majesty will not fall upon one of them, but, on the contrary, the post will go to Mahmud Pasha, the Minister of War. This is what Newres Pasha tells me, but I have seen several persons, including his attendant physician, and they tell me that the Grand Vizir may be back at work again in ten days."¹

During those days when everybody in Constantinople seemed to await with pleasant expectancy news of the death of the Grand Vizir, and when speculations were rife regarding the choice of his successor, Abraham worked away at his allotted task. His account of his stewardship, addressed to the Khedive on 2nd August, contained these items :—

"As I have a relative who is the sub-director of the Pera telegraph office, I wanted to find out whether the Foreign Office or the Police had ever asked for copies of the telegrams that pass between us. He replied that no such demand had ever been made of his office, but that as our messages go over the stations of Therapia and Buyoukdere he would find out from them and let me know.' A few days later he came back and said that his investigations had

¹ *Ibid.*, 26th July, 1871.

convinced him that our communications were not being copied.

"But," continued this report, "this assurance was given me more than a month ago. On Thursday, the chief of the Therapia office came to me and said that he had a very serious communication to make to me. I asked him what it was. He replied : 'It is about your ciphered messages. You use two ciphers without groups. They are the easiest thing in the world to decipher. When they have gone three or four times through an office an experienced operator has no difficulty in reading their text.' To prove to me that this was true he sat down, and, before my eyes, made up a message with our cipher. Thus, having no confidence in our code, I at once got in touch with Mehemed Aga, who has a copy of it, but rarely uses it, and told him what I had learnt. The code which Riaz Pasha has is equally defective, and we should destroy it and the others.

"It is true that up to now the Government has neglected this matter, but copies of our messages are kept on file at the Central Office, and thus it is possible that all our telegrams sent and received may some day be copied. In order to avoid a continuance of this menace, we should, for the moment, use as a code the little dictionary which I am sending by this mail."¹

After this, from time to time, Abraham spoke of the necessity of changing the code in use. He was in an optimistic mood when he wrote this letter dealing with the viceregal cipher, for the health of the Grand Vizir continued to be most alarming—or rather, most encouraging. Between the lines of another

¹ *Ibid.*, 2nd August, 1871.

message dated 2nd August, the faithful Armenian brought out the fact that he was making arrangements to be on friendly terms with the men who would be most likely to come into power in the event of the death of Ali Pasha. Safet Pasha and Mahmud Pasha were among those whose names figured prominently in the new combinations. It will be recalled that in an earlier report Abraham had advised Ismail that Mahmud Pasha, then Minister of War, would in all probability be the next Grand Vizir. Here is what he now said about these two influential politicians :—

“ I have seen Safet Pasha several times. He is badly frightened, but if we give him £5,000 he will accept and be at the service of Your Highness.

“ Thanks to Tafik Effendi I have had two meetings with Mahmud Pasha. We did not speak of money, but Tafik Effendi has sounded him and assures me that he will accept. During his conversation with me Mahmud Pasha spoke about his building operations, and that he was pressed for cash. He is interested in cotton samples. I shall use this interest as a pretext for keeping in touch with him.

“ If we succeed in getting him to receive money we shall have to give him £7,500.

“ Through Bessim Bey I saw Kibrishi Pasha. We did not speak of money, but if Your Highness desires it we can, so Bessim Bey says, get him to accept. If my august master wishes it I can get Nache Kiatip Emin Bey in the same way. But, Monseigneur, this is a very delicate and a very dangerous matter, and it is of the utmost importance that nobody else be let into the secret.”¹

¹ *Ibid.*, 2nd August, 1871.

In this report of 2nd August, Mahmud Pasha is referred to as the Minister of Marine, although on 26th July, he was spoken of as Minister of War. On 8th August he was again referred to as Minister of Marine. The telegram sent to the Khedive on this latter date stresses Abraham's strategy. It speaks of money and of parrots. Both were of equal importance, because if it were desirable to placate Mahmud Pasha with gold it was equally necessary to win the Sultan's favour with parrots. Abdul Aziz loved animals of all kinds and birds of all sorts. But his passion was that of the collector. He sought them as a bibliophile runs down a rare book, not in order to make use of it, but to look at it. Here is the text of what the "observer" telegraphed and of what, it is to be hoped, he safely coded :—

"Mehemed Effendi tells me that the Grand Vizir will not live long, and that the probabilities are that Mahmud Pasha, the Minister of Marine, will replace him. If we have made up our minds to give him any money, now is the time to do so. When he becomes Grand Vizir it will be extremely difficult to give it to him, and if we have to wait we shall have to give him a bigger sum in order to get him to accept.

"His Majesty summoned me to the Palace. Newres Pasha asked me for the parrots. Mehemed Aga tells me that Your Highness wants some as well. We have ordered them in England, but the Sultan also desires various kinds of gilded pheasants, geese, and rare animals. As Your Highness has no such treasures, I have ordered them in Europe. I should like to know, for my future guidance, what I am

to do should similar requests be made at a future date." ¹

This was an urgent message. The Grand Vizir might die at any moment. It was feared that when he passed away Mehemed Pasha's stock would soar to great heights. It really made no difference whether he held the War Portfolio or the Navy assignment. The important fact was that Abraham looked upon him as being the man of the hour whose price would mount when he became Grand Vizir. It is thus not surprising to note that Ismail replied :—

"Do not delay payment of seven thousand pounds to Mehemed Pasha, but be sure that they get into his hands. If you have no ready cash, telegraph me immediately and I will remit. Get the birds that the Palace wants." ¹

Here is Abraham's report of how he executed this mission in so far as it referred to Mehemed Pasha :—

"As soon as I received the order of Your Highness I got into touch with Tafik Effendi. He called on Mahmud Pasha and has come to tell me that the Pasha will not accept anything except through him, and that the amount must therefore be placed under a sealed cover and brought by one of my men to the Palace of the Pasha, where it will be received by Tafik Effendi and by him delivered to Mahmud Pasha. As this matter is very important, and as I can only answer for myself, I shall do nothing except as the result of a specific order from my august master.

"If Your Highness desires that the matter be

¹ *Ibid.*, 10th August, 1871.

handled by Tafik Effendi, we can give him the money at once. If Your Highness decides to wait a little, I can use the pretext of the cotton samples in order to get in touch with Mahmud Pasha. This will give an opportunity to speak a great deal to him, and I shall be able in this way to get him to take the money from me. The only difficulty in this connection is that this is not a matter that can be handled at any odd moment, and delay is almost inevitable. I ask that Your Highness give me his orders.

"Safet Pasha is prepared to take the £5,000 as soon as Your Highness desires. Kiprisly Pasha has been ill for two days."¹

The next report had birds as its introductory subject. It read, in part :—

"On 6th August, I received a note from Newres asking me to come to the Palace. As soon as I entered he asked me for parrots, similar to those which had been shown to me. At the same time Newres spoke to me of other birds that His Majesty had seen in Paris, and which he would like to have. As I could not follow his explanations I suggested that we get an album of birds to facilitate the execution of the Sultan's wishes. With some trouble I found an album prepared by one of the great artists of Paris. On Wednesday morning I brought it to the Sultan, and he has selected a collection of rare birds and has asked that they be obtained for him as soon as possible."²

The letter which conveyed this information covered a great many subjects. It was replete with Court and political gossip. It mentioned incidentally that the Grand Vizir was determined not to die to scheduled

¹ *Ibid.*, 15th August, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 16th August, 1871.

time. This fact encouraged Ismail to believe that the Mahmud Pasha matter was not one of extreme urgency. He accordingly telegraphed Abraham :—

“You are perfectly right not to trust anybody, and I approve your point of view. As this is a ticklish matter I am sending you by the first mail the cotton samples you require. In this way you will have an opportunity to see a great deal of him and the matter can be arranged between you on a friendly basis. In this way we shall know where we stand.”¹

Abraham's next telegram again speaks of the Sultan and his birds. A lengthy report of 23rd August brings out the fact that His Majesty had kept some of these birds near him for almost two hours and then had sent some of them to Validé Sultane and two to his first wife. Later on the same letter says that on Monday some of the hens, pheasants, and geese had arrived from Paris and that the Sultan had them put in cages and brought into his presence. “There were forty enormous cages,” reports Abraham, “and everything was topsy-turvy. The Bekchis and others were put to work to instal the cages in one of the upper drawing-rooms.”

While all this work was going on the First Chamberlain, Newres Pasha, came to Abraham and said :—

“His Majesty is delighted and wants to know what all this has cost, so that he may pay the bill. I answered,” runs the report, “that I did not know, but that I could say that this was a gift from His Highness. Newres Pasha then left me and returned to His Majesty's presence. A few moments later he was again with me, and submitted to me a list of

¹ *Ibid.*, 19th August, 1871.

several pheasants and geese of the same species that he would like to have. . . .

"All these dogs and fowl for which His Majesty is continually asking are very expensive, for he calls for rare specimens and they cost a great deal. I have already remitted 35,000 francs for them, and I fear that the bill may run up to 50,000 francs, if these requests continue. . . . I shall have to build aviaries, and they will involve another outlay of about 30,000 francs. I shall await such orders as my august master may desire to send me."¹

As the franc in those days was a gold franc, and not the depreciated franc of the post-War period, these birds and animals were costing extremely large sums.

¹ *Ibid.*, 23rd August, 1871.

CHAPTER XII

THE SULTAN OUTGROWS BIRDS

DURING the hours when the Sultan deserted his harim in order to betake himself to his aviary, Abraham and Ismail continued their active correspondence. On 23rd August, the former was able to report that :—

“Tafik Effendi has told me that Mahmud Pasha will take the money from me, and I have thus drawn on the Ministry of Finance at two months' date for £12,500. As soon as I get the cash in my hands, I shall carry it to Safet Pasha and Mahmud Pasha. If I arrange with the others I will let my august master know by wire. The Grand Vizir is apparently better, but only apparently. The disease is still progressing and, beginning with the Sultan, everybody, except his creatures, awaits his death with impatience.”¹

A week later a lengthy summary of events conveyed to Ismail the information that the Sultan was displeased with Newres Pasha, the First Chamberlain, who was such a staunch supporter of the Khedive. The same mail also carried an interesting report about Mahmud Pasha. It read :—

“As I had the honour to say to my august master, I had answered Tafik Effendi that I had to give Mahmud Pasha the money in person. The Pasha at first demurred, but ended by accepting. Tafik

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, 23rd August, 1871.

Effendi came to see me on Friday, and announced that Mahmud Pasha would receive me on Monday morning at one o'clock, that I could bring the money myself, but that I should convert it into consols, in order that the parcel should be as small as possible. This is what I did. £7,500 represents a little less than 16,000 consols, so I brought 16,000 consols in order to have a round figure.

"I covered these bonds with cotton and put them into bags, just as Mahmud Pasha had told Tafik Effendi to tell me to do, and I brought them on Monday morning as cotton samples. When I reached Mahmud Pasha's home I found Tafik Effendi awaiting me. He went into an adjoining room to tell the Pasha, who was then in the harim, of my arrival. They talked a little, and when we were alone, Mahmud Pasha asked me about Your Highness, where you were and whether I had received the cotton samples. I answered that the samples had arrived and the rest would come by the next boat. He replied :—

" 'This is very hard on me. I have never taken anything from anybody. This will be the first time. If it does not incommode His Highness, will you not keep the money in your possession so that I may draw on it, little by little, as I may require ?'

"I then said : 'The money is downstairs.' He at once rang his bell and, when his servant had answered, gave instructions that the cotton samples which Abraham Bey had left downstairs should be brought to him.

"As soon as these orders had been carried out, Mahmud Pasha asked me to take the consols out of the bags, to put them in a drawer, and to leave the

bags and the cotton where they were. When I had done this, he said :

“ ‘ I have accepted this gift in order that His Highness may have no doubt about me. He may be sure that I shall do my utmost to be agreeable to him. You will have but to tell me what you want and if I am able to do it, it shall be done. You may count upon me to have Kourchid Pasha sent away from Constantinople.’ He then added : ‘ The Grand Vizir’s illness has grown worse. He has but a few more days to live.’ ”

Having thus disposed of Mahmud Pasha, Abraham added :—

“ This week I will bring the £5,000 to Safet Pasha in bank-notes and a like amount to Rushdi Pasha. If my august master approves of the suggestion, I think that it would be wise to offer a thousand pounds to the second Chamberlain, Ziver Effendi, £250 to Couci Bachi Kourchid Bey, and £150 to his second.

“ I am sending you, Monseigneur, by Mehemed Aga a new dictionary, so that you may use it with perfect confidence and thus be able to decode any message that may be sent without anybody else being able to decipher what we may say.”¹

On 4th September, Abraham sent two cablegrams to Ismail. They dealt with the Sultan and his birds and with Newres Pasha’s troubles. The first item explained that part of the shipment of birds desired by His Majesty had arrived, he had asked for the bill, and when he was informed that they were a present from the Khedive he remarked that there were three specimens which he would like to have

¹ *Ibid.*, 30th August, 1871.

as soon as possible. Their names are set forth in the dispatch, and they were quoted respectively at 1,500, 1,800, and 500 francs.

The reference to Newres Pasha was that he had been dismissed and his place given to Ziver Bey. But to console Ismail for the loss of the old First Chamberlain, Abraham was able to show returns on his Mahmud Pasha investment in the shape of this information :—

“ Mahmud Pasha says that in the eventuality of the death of Ali Pasha, it is possible that Khalil Pasha may be offered the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. He says that if His Majesty should suggest this nomination it would be impossible for him to refuse to agree, and he requests that steps be taken to forestall this contingency.”¹

Ismail caught the significance of the loss of Newres Pasha's services. It implied that his Palace organization had to be readjusted. He thus welcomed the opportunity of enlisting the collaboration of the new second chamberlain, and hastened to telegraph to Abraham :—

“ I have learnt with regret of the destitution of Newres Pasha, but happily he has been replaced by one of your friends. It would be most unfortunate should Khalil Chérif Pasha become Foreign Minister. Do your utmost to prevent this, and nothing must stand in your way to dissipate this menace.

“ You must act in this matter with the utmost prudence and tact. In regard to the birds that you have given the Sultan let me thank you for what you have done. If he asks for others get them.

¹ *Ibid.*, 14th September, 1871.

"Postpone any demand for the payment of the note due by Khalil Chérif Pasha."¹

Abraham's report to the Khedive, dated 6th September, explains this last paragraph, for it refers to a note due by Khalil Chérif Pasha, held by Ismail and long overdue. The Khedive's desire not to press for payment is readily understood when it is recalled that the Grand Vizir died on 6th September and that this debtor was a strong candidate for the Foreign Ministry in the new Cabinet. The death of Ali Pasha was announced in a telegram sent on 6th September. The next day Ismail wired his Constantinople confidential agent :—

"So the Grand Vizir is dead. The intrigues must now be most active not only for Ali Pasha's post, but also for the Foreign Ministry. As I wired you yesterday, you must do everything possible and use any means available to prevent Khalil Pasha from becoming Foreign Minister. Your activity, your acquaintanceships, your money, and every force that you can bring to bear must be used to defeat him. Be assured that this would be the greatest service that you have ever rendered me, and you know that I do not forget those who serve me."²

The man who thus saw the unmeasured gratitude of his august master awaiting him, if the Foreign Office could be kept out of the hands of Khalil Chérif Pasha, answered the same day :—

"I am hard at work endeavouring to prevent Khalil Chérif Pasha from getting the Foreign Office, and I am invoking the aid of the Palace and of [blank]. I have made certain promises. If I can succeed

¹ *Ibid.*, 16th September, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 7th September, 1871.

it will be an obvious victory. Emin Bey is backing Khalil Chérif Pasha." ¹

He followed this up by another telegram which said :—

" I had foreseen that should Newres Pasha lose his billet the post would go to Ziver Bey. To be on the safe side I have advanced him, from time to time, an aggregate sum of £700 and I have settled upon him a monthly allowance of £60. I have also promised to do my utmost to get my august master to advance him £1,000. Yesterday, I said to him that when he was Second Chamberlain it was difficult for me to get him this extra amount, but now I would do all that I could to get the Viceroy to give him not a thousand, but several thousand pounds. I think that if my august master would judge it appropriate to give him £2,500 he would be delighted. He told me that he would do what he could to prevent the nomination of Khalil Chérif Pasha." ¹

A cable sent by Abraham to Ismail still later on this same day, showed that he was a good prophet and a good business man. We say this since he was then able to convey the information that Mahmud Pasha, the statesman who received Consols in the form of cotton samples, had become Grand Vizir. The same message added that Mahmud Pasha promised to do his best to give his foreign portfolio to Safet Pasha or Mehemet Rushdi Pasha.¹

This news pleased the Khedive, and he rushed the following message to Constantinople :—

" I greatly hope that now that Mahmud Pasha is Grand Vizir you will be able, through him or through

¹ *Ibid.*, 7th September, 1871.

the Palace, to prevent the Foreign Office from going to the man we do not want.

"You must not lose a moment. Be liberal in your promises, and be assured that if the result is obtained they will be carried out. Now that the Grand Vizir has been chosen the other post will be filled without delay."¹

Abraham worked like a busy bee during these fateful hours. He reported to his sovereign on 8th September, by wire, that he had seen Mahmud Pasha and had been informed that the delay in filling the Foreign Office was due to the fact that the Sultan wanted Khalil Chérif Pasha for that post. "I proposed that this assignment be given to either Mehemed Rushdi Pasha or Djemil Pasha," said the Grand Vizir to Abraham, "but I made no headway. I am in an awkward position. If I take up the cudgels energetically against Khalil Chérif Pasha the Sultan may suspect my relations with Egypt."¹

Twenty-four hours later the cable between Constantinople and Cairo carried this announcement in code from Abraham to Ismail:—

"Sewer Effendi has been chosen Foreign Minister."²

He was what we might call "a dark horse". His appointment was a victory for Ismail, as his "observer" had directed his batteries, not on behalf of a candidate, but against Khalil Chérif Pasha. He had worked for the selection of Mahmud Pasha as Grand Vizir, but he had not sought to say who should be Foreign Minister.

One of the factors in this new Administration was

¹ *Ibid.*, 8th September, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 9th September, 1871.

Rushdi Pasha. This circumstance caused Abraham to wire the Khedive :—

“ I have agreed with Rushdi that I shall bring him a present from Your Highness. No figure was mentioned, and Saib Bey said that Rushdi refused to commit himself and wanted to know what the sum would be. I answered £5,000. The next day Saib Bey returned and told me that Rushdi Pasha had said that inasmuch as up to now he had never received anything from Your Highness, if he was going to take anything, it would have to be £10,000. Saib Bey has intimated to me that if we offer him £7,500 he will be satisfied.”

Ismail did not entirely approve of the procedure thus suggested by his mouthpiece. He telegraphed Abraham :—

“ Do not bargain. Pay him £10,000 from hand to hand. If this cannot be done, be certain that it reaches him, telling him, if necessary, that he should get the Sultan's consent. But if the matter is not kept a secret it will be useless to give him the amount. He talked nonsense when he said that he had never received any money from me. He got £10,000 from me about four or five years ago. And so certain is it that he did, that he sent a friend to thank me for the gift. I was in Constantinople at the time. He has probably forgotten about the matter. I mention this to you for your guidance, but do not speak of it to anybody.”¹

Just before sending these instructions, Ismail had telegraphed to Abraham authorizing the payment of £2,500 to Ziver, the new First Chamberlain.²

¹ *Ibid.*, 11th September, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 10th September, 1871.

The Khedive's message crossed one from Constantinople announcing that four geese had just been presented to the Sultan in his name. A subsequent dispatch from Abraham seems to indicate that some of the correspondence may have been lost. Here is a message which requires further explanation :—

"We can do it by spending £30,000. All that I could do, my august master, would be to request that Khalil Chérif Pasha be made governor of a province and thus be kept out of the way. But to do this I would have to pay £30,000. Saib Bey has called to ask when I am going to bring the money to Rushdi Pasha."¹

Ismail's reaction to this proposed outlay of £30,000 shows that even if one or two telegrams may have been lost the continuity of the narrative has not been broken. The Khedive replied :—

"The nomination of Khalil Chérif Pasha to a provincial governorship is not worth so much trouble or such a price as £30,000, because as he has not been made Foreign Minister he must be sent to another post or given an Embassy. But if for £30,000 you can arrange the question of judicial reform I will put up the money."²

A second dispatch of this same date shows that Ismail wanted to know what were Abraham's relations with Sewer Pasha, the new Foreign Minister. In this letter the Khedive for the first time addresses his representative as "my dear Chamberlain". The reply to this question was somewhat delayed, but on 14th September, Abraham reported that the Sultan showed him several dogs, described others, and wanted all of them. "They are very rare and very expensive,"

¹ *Ibid.*, 11th September, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 13th September, 1871.

continues the letter, only to add : "the aviaries, which the Sultan desires, will cost 100,000 francs."¹

The next report sent in by Abraham was, perhaps, more typical of Constantinople than any of the choice morsels that have already been culled from a bountiful supply. It contains this paragraph :—

"General discontent reigns in the Ministries. There is no money as the Government has no funds. It is the Palace that rules. Whenever I go to the Palace I find Simon Bey there. In order that we may know what transpires there, we have the first chamberlain. But we need the subordinate chamberlains, the young *Mussahibs* and the scribes. From these quarters we can learn a great deal about what is going on, and thus have means of controlling what the men higher up may tell us. I have suggested to them that I should try to get something for them. To own them completely something must be given to each one of them. This will require from £4,000 to £5,000."²

All these recent payments called for an accounting. Abraham sent an explanatory report on 18th September, and enclosed with it the following detailed statement of expenditures :—

	£
"Mahmud Pasha	7,500
"Safet Pasha	5,000
"Ziver Bey	2,500
"Birds and dogs	3,000
"1st and 2nd Couchdji Bachi	400
"Cost of telegrams	1,800
"Journalists	2,310
"Mahmud's Pasha son-in-law	2,500
"Reserved for Mehemet Rushdi Pasha .	10,000

£35,010"²

¹ *Ibid.*, 14th September, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 18th September, 1871.

While Beys and journalists were thus shown to cost less than birds and dogs, the Khedive knew nature, both human and animal, well enough to find nothing incorrect in this appraisal. He thus advised his Constantinople chamberlain that :

" I have gone over the statement of sums spent to date and it has been duly entered without names or details. Orders in this sense have been given. You may pay the £10,000 to Mehemet Rushdi Pasha. Have you promised anything to little Rushdi Pasha?"¹

This last question brought the answer that the £10,000 was intended for little Rushdi Pasha of Akkian and that nothing had been promised to big Mehemet Rushdi Pasha. Abraham asked for instructions as to whether he should pay the £10,000 to little Rushdi Pasha of Akkian.¹

He was directed by wire to pay but £5,000 to little Rushdi Pasha.² But these orders bothered him. He had already promised the man £10,000. So when his instructions came he replied :

" I have received the telegram from my august master dated the twenty-second in which I am ordered to pay little Rushdi Pasha but £5,000. I told him that I had been authorized to pay him £10,000, but that the money had not come and that as soon as it comes I shall pay him. If instead of £10,000 we give him but £5,000 it may vex him and he may refuse it. As regards big Rushdi Pasha, my august master will permit me to say that it would be wise to pay him because we shall need him for the matter of judicial reform and for the Yeken case."³

¹ *Ibid.*, 19th September, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 22nd September, 1871.

³ *Ibid.*, 24th September, 1871.

Ismail lost no time in answering :—

“I agree. Pay little Rushdi Pasha of Akkian £10,000 as promised and find a way of paying big Rushdi from £7,000 to £10,000 to get him as well. I am entirely of your opinion.” But later, on the same day, the Khedive cabled :—

“I have just learnt that little Rushdi Pasha of Akkian has been discharged. I trust that our money has not been lost. Let me know at once.”¹ And forthwith came back the reply : “I have given nothing to little Rushdi Pasha of Akkian.”²

The latter days of September and the first two weeks of October saw many letters and telegrams pass between Constantinople and Cairo. But they contain nothing of outstanding interest. 18th October, however, brought forth this code dispatch from Abraham to Ismail :—

“Tafik Effendi came to me this morning and said :—

“‘The Grand Vizir directs me to say that he desires to terminate the judicial reform matter, but on condition that the Khedive will pay him £60,000 on delivery of the letter from the Sultan for which His Highness asks. Here is how he proposed to proceed :—

“‘As soon as he gets this letter the Grand Vizir will ask His Majesty to allow him to bring the subject to an end. He will then call the Ministers together and say to them : “His Majesty has taken cognizance of the wish of His Highness and approves of it as being in the interests of Egypt, but does not desire to ratify it without your approval.”’

¹ *Ibid.*, 25th September, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 26th September, 1871.

"The Ministers will not dare to oppose, and the desired result will have been accomplished."¹

The Khedive expressed his willingness to put up £60,000 for the purpose of obtaining judicial reform for Egypt, but he insisted that his chamberlain, Abraham, should see the Grand Vizir in person "as the matter is delicate and it would be unwise to have a third party meddling in it."²

Six days passed, and the ship of State entered still deeper waters. On 26th October the tireless agent of the indefatigable monarch got in touch with Mahmud Pasha and had a heart-to-heart talk with him which is thus reported :—

"I was about to leave when, after a moment's reflection, the Grand Vizir said to me :—

" 'I should like to speak to you about something, but before I do so, I must have your word of honour that it will remain between us and that you will not say a word of it to anybody, not even to Tafik Effendi.'

"After I had assured him of my discretion, he thus continued :—

" 'Is the Viceroy disposed to give money to His Majesty ?' I answered that I could not reply to such a question. He then added :—

" 'Did Newres Pasha ever put such an inquiry to you ?'

"I retorted :—

" 'Newres Pasha told me very often that the Palace is very hard pressed and that it has no means of paying its expenses, but at no time did he ever suggest to me that His Majesty asked that His Highness do him a favour.'

¹ *Ibid.*, 18th October, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 20th October, 1871.

"To this the Grand Vizir rejoined :—

" 'I did not say that His Majesty asked for anything, but on several occasions, during audiences which I have had with His Majesty, I was given to understand that if His Highness were to offer the Sultan £150,000, I would have hopes of being able to get His Majesty to accept the sum. I would like the Viceroy to put the matter in my hands, for I take it that if His Highness himself were to make the suggestion it would not be accepted. I give my word in advance to His Highness the Khedive that nobody will ever know anything of the matter, whether His Majesty accepts or does not accept. The matter will be known only to us. Make this clear to the Khedive, and be so kind as to report my conversation to him with the request that he deign to answer as soon as possible.' " ¹

While Ismail was considering this proposition Abraham telegraphed him :—

"I have ordered for His Majesty some superb Indian parrots, and I have imported from Italy very beautiful cows of various colours, white, yellow, etc., and beautiful bulls to match." ²

These parrots, bulls, and cows, as well as the dogs which were referred to in another telegram, were all very well in their way, but they made no special appeal to the Grand Vizir, and, perhaps, but little to the Sultan. At all events, Mahmud Pasha kept at Abraham for an answer to his £150,000 suggestion. These pressing demands were communicated to Ismail. The Khedive replied on 4th November :—

"If I have not answered you about the £150,000

¹ *Ibid.*, 28th October, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 29th October, 1871.

which the Grand Vizir would like to offer the Sultan in my name and which had been touched upon in a conversation between you and Newres Pasha, this is not because I have not given the matter consideration, but because I am carefully examining it. The matter is both delicate and important. It requires great reflection and careful attention. I should like to give the subject further thought, and I hope to answer in three or four days.

"If the Grand Vizir should ask questions, say to him that you personally thank him for his suggestion, that in view of its importance it will have to be answered by letter and not by wire, and that as soon as word is received you will let him know what His Highness has had to say."¹

Ismail had made up his mind by 9th November what to answer. It was that £150,000 is a big sum and that that amount, added to what he had already given and promised, required some financing. But he continued :—

"Announce to the Grand Vizir that we are happy that His Majesty will accept this sum, as it furnishes us an opportunity to be agreeable to him, and that the Khedive is always ready to obey the orders of His Majesty and is also grateful when what he does pleases the Grand Vizir. But I ask and I recommend to you that you assure yourself by all possible means that this entire sum reaches the hands of the Sultan. Now we cannot send this sum in bank-notes or gold. Shall we send it in drafts or in consols or in Egyptian Bonds? Once this amount gets into the hands of His Majesty, our chances of success will be greatly

¹ *Ibid.*, 4th November, 1871.

increased, provided, of course, something be promised to the Grand Vizir and to certain other persons when their services are needed."¹

This sum of £150,000, destined for the Sultan, did not wipe out the £60,000 intended for the Grand Vizir's pocket. A dispatch from Abraham to Ismail, dated 12th November, makes this perfectly clear.² It had, however, been agreed that this latter sum was to be a cash-on-delivery transaction. Notwithstanding this fact, the Argus-eyed chamberlain was forced to tell his august master on 17th November that the Grand Vizir was importunate and wanted an advance payment of £30,000. Abraham advised the Khedive to yield to this unwarranted exaction.³

When Mahmud Pasha was thus asking for the payment of £30,000 before the amount had been earned, the Sultan did not forget about his aviary. This time he called for several rare species of pigeons. He also asked for additional specimens of geese, ducks, pheasants, and of various kinds of birds.⁴ Six days later the Sultan had another list of birds ready for Abraham. The cost of the feathered treasures enumerated on it was estimated at from 80,000 to 100,000 francs or from £3,200 to £4,000.⁵ Notwithstanding these staggering figures, Ismail gave telegraphic instructions that the order be executed.

The Grand Vizir looked up Abraham on 28th November and asked him categorically whether Ismail intended giving the Sultan £150,000. "I answered him," reported the "observer", "that were His Majesty to request such a sum of His

¹ *Ibid.*, 9th November, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 17th November, 1871.

³ *Ibid.*, 25th November, 1871.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 12th November, 1871.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 19th November, 1871.

Highness, the Khedive would not refuse it." The Grand Vizir then replied : " Do me the favour of telling His Highness that, if it be the same to him, I shall tell His Majesty that the Khedive, having heard that the Sultan had ordered armed frigates in Europe, desires to give £150,000 in order to pay a part of their cost."¹

When these facts were cabled to Cairo, Ismail replied :—

" I am in no sense opposed to what the Grand Vizir proposes to say to the Sultan, but, in my opinion, the amount should be offered for His Majesty's own purse, for the sum is intended for him personally and not for the State. Besides, if the matter is handled as the Grand Vizir suggests, it will become known, and I shall be embarrassed."²

These multiple expenses caused Abraham to make up his accounts to 1st December, 1871. They do not, of course, comprise the Sultan's honorarium. Here are some of his figures, outside those covered by the previous statement :—

" Mehemed Rushdi Pasha	£10,000
" For birds bought in Europe to date	5,315.18
" For dogs bought in Vienna and Budapest	921.48
" Telegrams	3,504.20
" Expenses of persons who made several trips to Europe for birds and dogs.	250
" A. Thiery, for aviaries on account	3,000
" For Palace subordinates	4,860
" Tefik Effendi	2,700
" A horse for the Palace	250
" For various animals as per list	766
" Said Bey	200
" A. Raphaelli	100 "

¹ *Ibid.*, 28th November, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 29th November, 1871.

The total runs up £53,477'70.¹

When Cairo was checking these figures the Grand Vizir and Abraham were conferring. The latter was able to telegraph the Khedive on 1st December :—

“ I have seen the Grand Vizir and spoken to him about the £150,000, and I have explained to him Your Highness's point of view. He entirely approves of it, thanks Your Highness for having proposed it, and accepts it.”¹

Although these details had been thus arranged, a snag was encountered because four of the ducks recently given to the Sultan were found by him to be commonplace. Abraham hurried to the Palace, looked into the matter and immediately telegraphed Paris to send him sixty rare specimens.² With this stumbling-block thus removed Abraham was able to report to the Khedive on 20th December :—

“ Tafil Effendi told me that the Grand Vizir wanted to see me. I went to the Porte, where I saw the Grand Vizir, and he said to me : ‘ Yesterday, I spoke at length to the Sultan about the Khedive and we discussed the question of the £150,000. After some little hesitation, His Majesty accepted. Let me know when everything is ready, so that I may be able to tell you how to bring the money to the Palace.’ ”³

Another message of the same date spoke of putting the £150,000 into Consols. A further note of 23rd December said that the Consols were to be put into a box, as explained.⁵ A later dispatch of this same date said that any delay might displease His Majesty and might possibly bring about a refusal.

¹ *Ibid.*, 1st December, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, 6th December, 1871.

³ *Ibid.*, 20th December, 1871.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 22nd December, 1871.

And while the Khedive, Abraham, and the Grand Vizir had their minds centred on working out a way to get the money into the Palace without causing too much comment, Ziver Bey, His Majesty's First Chamberlain, called on Abraham and said :—

“ His Majesty directs me to tell you to telegraph to have the sheep here as soon as possible and to get him the very best and the strongest kind. His Majesty has about fifty splendid ones at the Palace, but he wants some still better ones.”¹

¹ *Ibid.*, 25th December, 1871.

CHAPTER XIII

SHUT THAT WINDOW !

THIS constant refrain of Ottoman venality could be kept up almost indefinitely. There is enough additional material in the Royal Egyptian Archives to continue on this same note for chapter after chapter. The end of 1871 has now been reached, and that date is probably as good as any other for ringing down the curtain. But one additional fact will be brought out to complete the picture which has just been presented : namely, that the Egyptian Budget for 1873-4 includes this entry :—

“ Present to the Sultan of a man-of-war built in England, £289,421.”¹

It had seemed that Abraham and the Grand Vizir had agreed upon £150,000, that the sum was to be a personal gift, and to have nothing to do with the purchase of an armed frigate. But the Egyptian budget has somehow or other changed both the figure and the object. All this obviously suggests another chain of ideas ; but the matter will not be pressed any further.

A great deal of stress has been laid in the earlier chapters of this work upon Ismail's “ moral principle ” balance-sheet. It has been insisted that if various expenses undertaken by him had no collateral value

¹ *Notes sur le Budget Egyptien*, par Henry Oppenheim. Paris (Imprimerie et librairie administratives de Paul Dupont), 1874, p. 43.

such as would appeal to a banker, they nevertheless weighed heavily in the scale of "moral principles". But page after page has subsequently been devoted to drawing a picture in which corruption dominates the narrative and which portrays the Khedive as expending scores of thousands of pounds in "*Baksheesh*". This apparent contradiction requires a word of explanation.

The self-evident key to the problem thus presented is the frank statement that no attempt is being made to prove Ismail a saint. He was not. Had he been a candidate for canonization he would probably have been a dull, uninteresting man who would never have been forced to abdicate. He was a child of his environment. He had the faults of his virtues as well as the virtues of his faults. He dished out his money to Sultan and Grand Vizir, to Pasha and office boy, because he was at war with Turkey, and this was his way of carrying on war.

We have already said that General Stone and the forty odd American officers who entered the Khedivial service shortly after the end of the American Civil War had been told that they were being enlisted to fight for the independence of Egypt. The romantic idea of drawing their swords in defence of liberty was one of the magnets that drew to the Orient these demobilized veterans of the great American fratricidal strife. They had been chosen because Ismail knew that if he had selected Europeans, Europe would have had a first mortgage on his independence.

It has been said that he had made arrangements to announce this defiance of Turkey at the ceremony

of the opening of the Suez Canal. He had an understanding with Victor Emmanuel of Italy that the latter would let Turkey know that if she sought to interfere with this declaration of independence, the Piedmontese army and navy would attack certain outlying Ottoman territory. Napoleon III heard of this, and entered an emphatic veto. Ismail was forced to abandon his project when it encountered this French opposition. The refusal of Europe to permit the Khedive to fight the Sultan by armed force compelled Ismail to fall back upon that form of war in which money supplants cannon.

No proof can be adduced to support the categorical statements which have just been made. No available blue-book material corroborates them. They are based upon assurances which emanate from a source of high authority, but which cannot be quoted. But everything tends to confirm the accuracy of the basic information thus conveyed. Ismail's ambition to free Egypt from Turkey cannot be questioned. The whole orientation of his policy is there to prove it. There is no reason to doubt the truth of the statement made by Colonel Chaillé-Long. The Khedive's knowledge of Turkish venality was such that he was certain of his ability to win his independence by the sword, if allowed to challenge the Sultan. It is thus easy to understand his point of view. It was this :—

“Europe won't let me declare the independence of Egypt and fight Turkey, if need be, to obtain it. I will therefore get judicial reform and autonomy by the only arms available to me ; I will buy them. The game is worth the candle.”

But the date given for this attack on Turkey is

probably erroneous. It does not fit in with the enlistment of these American officers. Their contracts either follow the opening of the Suez Canal or immediately precede that event. And it does not harmonize with the facts set forth in this letter written by Nubar and dated Paris, 12th May, 1870 :—

“At the evening reception given by the Spanish Ambassador, Lord Lyons said to me that Lord Clarendon had received information from all sides about the orders for arms which the Khedive had placed in America and that he had instructed him (Lord Lyons) to speak to me about the matter and to warn me that the road upon which His Highness seemed to be launched was a bad road and could not lead to anything good.

“I was asked to call upon Lord Lyons the next day. I did so, and he repeated what he had said, adding that Stanton (the British Consul-General at Cairo) had received orders to call upon the Viceroy. I said that I knew nothing about the alleged purchase of arms. Lord Lyons answered that he knew perfectly well that I was unaware of all this, but that his information was so direct and categorical that the possibility of doubt had to be excluded. He added that if the matter were not cleared up it might create new troubles and new complications which Europe did not desire. It is perfectly natural, said he, that the Khedive should desire to be independent, but as His Highness is a wise and intelligent man he will understand that these armaments excite the suspicion of the Porte and the apprehensions of the Powers.”¹

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, Egypt, File Judicial Reform, 1870-5.

A memorandum dated 10th May, 1870, forwarded to Cairo by Nubar, but dictated by Ferdinand de Lesseps, reads :—

“ I have just met the Duc de Grammont, who asked me if I knew what the Khedive was doing at this moment. I said ‘ No ’. He then explained to me that the Government of the Emperor had received information that the Khedive had made a treaty with the United States by which His Highness had engaged about fifty American officers, ordered men-of-war and war material and torpedoes, and had decided to raise the standard of revolt against the Sultan. You understand the situation, said the Minister. France, notwithstanding her friendship for the Khedive and for Egypt, cannot support this policy, and will be compelled to side with England and with the rest of Europe. In the event of trouble America will be far away, and it is not Egypt or the Canal that will suffer, but the Khedive.”¹

A further letter, dated 18th May, 1870, shows that Emile Ollivier, then Prime Minister of France, said to Nubar :—

“ Tell His Highness in my name, as a friend, that these armaments cause apprehension, that the Government, and above all the Emperor, do not want complications, and that these armaments, instead of consolidating the position of the Khedive, weaken it.”¹

An essayist upon ethics would blame Ismail for having resorted to the only arms available to him when Europe took up this attitude. He had to yield to the pressure put upon him. And he saved streams of blood and bags of gold by what he did. Egypt

¹ *Ibid.*

benefited by his acts, even if a "moral principle" balance-sheet may not take cognizance of them. Had he been permitted to go to war, and had he won, his victory would have cost far more than the money that Abraham Bey paid out to men who were not seduced by him, but who were part and parcel of a corrupt administrative organization.

If Egypt is to-day probably the most prosperous country in the world, she owes this outstanding position to the genius of Cromer and to the prescience of Ismail. No attempt will be made to justify the first affirmation. It is assumed as a postulate. The cardinal factor in substantiating the second is the security which Egypt now enjoys as a result of the successful operation of that judicial reform for which Abraham worked so diligently, buying venal Ministers in Constantinople while Nubar was convincing hard-headed diplomatists in other capitals.

A word should be said about the nature of this judicial reform. It was born of the fact that Egypt is what is known in international law as a capitulatory country. This means that foreigners are not amenable to Egyptian law, or, to express the same idea in another way, it implies that in Egypt law is personal and not territorial. And from this flows the corollary that before the days of judicial reform, if an Englishman sold a bill of goods to a Portuguese or a Spaniard to a Dutchman, suit to enforce recovery could not be brought before an Egyptian Court, but had to be filed in the one instance before the Portuguese Consul and in the other before the Dutch. This means, of course, that the Englishman got the Portuguese Consul's construction of Portuguese law, and the

Spaniard the Dutchman's opinion of the statutes of Holland—and possibly nothing else.

All this played havoc with trade and prevented the influx of foreign capital. The judicial reform for which Ismail fought so tenaciously provided for the creation of a Mixed or International judiciary and for the adoption of a uniform code of laws which would be applied by this *imperium in imperio*. Lord Cromer, in one of his dispatches, thus summarizes the competence of these Tribunals :—

“ They adjudicate upon civil and commercial suits and disputes connected with the ownership of land between Europeans (meaning foreigners) and Egyptians, between Europeans (meaning foreigners) of different nationalities, and between Europeans (meaning foreigners) and the Egyptian Government.” ¹

When England began her occupation of Egypt the Mixed Courts had already been in existence for six years. They had given such stability to private enterprise that it required only the honesty, the tenacity, and the imagination of Sir Evelyn Baring, as Lord Cromer then was, to put the public exchequer in a healthy condition. If it had not been for the great Proconsul, the beneficent effects of judicial reform would, no doubt, have been lost, but if the Mixed Courts had not been there to give confidence to the individual investor, the whole framework of England's splendid effort would have tottered. We say this because Mr. Gladstone, during the earlier months of the British occupation, kept on repeating : “ Just a moment, if you please ; if you do not hurry us

¹ *Egypt since Cromer*, by Lord Lloyd. London (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.), 1933, vol. i, p. 17, note.

we shall leave." After his retirement from office Lord Salisbury said the same thing with a Conservative intonation in his voice.

Many years have passed since these statesmen marked time in Egypt. A gigantic war has been fought. It carried with it as a consequence a Treaty of Peace which recognized a British protectorate over Egypt. This régime was scrapped on 28th February, 1922. Egypt on that date became "independent with reservations". What this means is a conundrum. But it may be said that ever since this diplomatic riddle was evolved by a fertile brain and attributed to an outstanding soldier, England and Egypt have been trying to find a formula which will permit Britain to evacuate Egypt.

The foreign capital now invested in the Valley of the Nile, which assumes great proportions, views these furtive glances and these open discussions between London and Cairo with relative equanimity. It does so because Ismail's creation, the judicial reform for which Abraham spent thousands of pounds, is not affected by these "conversations". In a word, the palladium of law and order, the citadel of the property-rights of Egyptians as well as of the Europeans resident in Egypt, is now, 1933, not England, which may leave to-morrow, but the Mixed Courts which Ismail brought into being. The eyes of every Englishman in Egypt are now fixed upon them. Every British heart that beats in unison with Egypt's needs clings to those courts, whenever rumour has it that "conversations are progressing".

And if Egypt has attained that international status which permits her constituted authorities to discuss

her future with England, she owes this measure of freedom, this autonomy, to the firman which Ismail's purse did so much to win for Egypt on 8th June, 1873. That ukase confirmed the previous decrees and reduced Turkey's overlordship to something practically nominal. All this means that if the world does not approve of encouraging itching palms it would be well, before Ismail be too severely condemned for what he did, to recall that his procedure avoided bloodshed, obtained great advantages for Egypt, and deprived Turkey of nothing to which she was really entitled.

There is another element which should not be overlooked when Ismail is criticized for having spent at least £289,421 in buying from Turkey judicial reform and autonomy. It is compressed into the old saying : "People who live in glass houses should not throw stones." Lord Milner, who calls the Khedive a man "radically dishonest",¹ furnishes the evidence which shows the appositeness of this quotation. His *England in Egypt* records :—

"Nor would it be possible to give any idea of the unscrupulousness with which foreign diplomatic agents, especially during the reign of Ismail, used their influence to obtain from poor, weak Egypt the payment of even the most preposterous demands.

"The great object of securing a concession in those days was, not to carry on a useful enterprise, but to invent some excuse for throwing it up, and then to come down upon the government for compensation. Moreover, almost any loss which befell a foreigner, or any injury which he sustained, even if due entirely

¹ Milner, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

to accident or to his own fault, was made the occasion for demanding an indemnity. If his property was stolen the Government was to blame for not keeping sufficient police. If his boat ran ashore in the Nile, the Government was to blame for not dredging the river. 'Please shut that window,' Ismail Pasha is related to have said to one of his attendants during an interview with some European concessionnaire, 'for if this gentleman catches cold it will cost me £10,000.' " And this was hardly an exaggeration.

"When the Mixed Courts came into existence, there were £40,000,000 of foreign claims outstanding against the Government! What the real amount of injury which they represented was may be judged from the fact that in one case, where 30,000,000 francs had been demanded, the Mixed Courts awarded the plaintiff £1,000." ¹

The lesson taught by this quotation is obvious. Ismail's back was against the wall. Some of the Chancelleries of Europe were aiding and abetting blackmailers to extort money from the Khedive. This is a challenging statement, but it follows from Viscount Milner's words, just cited, that :—

"It is impossible to give any idea of the unscrupulousness with which foreign diplomatic agents, especially during the reign of Ismail, used their influence to obtain from poor, weak Egypt the payment of even the most preposterous demands."

The Powers would not allow Ismail to fight Turkey and obtain from that country by his sword judicial reform and autonomy. He had to choose between the alternative of paying 30,000,000 francs for a

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

claim assessed by the Mixed Courts at £1,000 or of buying relief from venal Turkish officials. Is it cricket to blame him for getting protection by unorthodox means, when acceptance of the maintenance of European diplomatic thumb-screws meant national suicide? If it is, then the old Latin maxim, *salus populi suprema lex*, is all wrong.

Europe was most reluctant to give up its privileges. It did not, as a whole, take kindly to judicial reform. England's approach to the problem does her honour. But it took Nubar Pasha months that turned into years before all the Chancelleries agreed to the creation of the Mixed Courts. France held out to the last, and did not accord her adhesion until after the new judicial machinery had already begun to operate. Nubar's Odyssey from one end of Europe to the other constitutes an important episode in the reign of Ismail.

As early as 18th October, 1867, Cairo was given to understand that the English Foreign Office "recognized the necessity of judicial reform, abhorred the vices of the system in vogue, and promised the collaboration of the British Government with the Powers, provided that the Egyptian Government gave assurance of the consent of the Powers".¹

Word came from Germany on 8th November, 1867, that the principle of judicial reform was accepted, provided that the problem of guarantees for foreigners be arranged satisfactorily and provided also that adequate provision be made for a transitory period and for the creation of a school of law for the training of the future judges.² Things did not move quite

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, File Judicial Reform, 1867.

² *Ibid.*

so smoothly in France. Nubar reported to Cairo on 5th March, 1869 :—

“General Fleury has advised me, if I desire that the negotiations be brought to a prompt and favourable close, to ask the Empress for an audience, and to say to her that our august master had instructed me to inform him whether Her majesty intended visiting Egypt on the occasion of the opening of the Canal, for, if she did, he desired to prepare a reception worthy of so gracious and powerful a sovereign. The General said that this step would greatly flatter the Empress, that it was she who controlled Lavalette,¹ and that otherwise we took the chance of having negotiations drag along indefinitely.

“Lord Lyons, whom I also saw this afternoon, said that M. de Lavalette was well disposed, but that he was not in a hurry as the Belgian question absorbed his time. I hesitate to move towards the Empress as so strongly advised by Fleury without first having the instructions of His Highness.”²

This little side-play of burning incense to the vanity of a woman throws an interesting sidelight upon the character of Ismail. It has been alleged that he spent tens of thousands of pounds on entertaining the crowned heads who came to Egypt to assist at the opening of the Suez Canal. The accusation is probably well founded, but this Nubar letter of 5th March, 1869, shows that there may have been method in his madness, and that the ostentation of his display may have been part of his campaign for judicial reform.

In any case, the Empress appears to have been

¹ The Marquis de Lavalette, then French Foreign Minister.

² Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, File Judicial Reform, 1869.

flattered by what Nubar said to her at the audience which she gave him. Things went on so smoothly that on 24th March, 1869, the following telegram was sent to Cairo :—

“ I have had assurances from the Ministry that the adherence of the French Government is certain. I may therefore now congratulate Your Highness. The death of Madame de Lavalette will naturally delay official announcement for a few days.”¹

While Nubar was thus getting matters into shape in Europe, Ismail looked over his files and saw that nobody had ever taken the trouble to consult the United States. He knew that Washington had thrown Napoleon III out of Mexico. He had great respect for the Republic of the West. It is thus not surprising to observe that he addressed a personal note to Nubar, dated 12th July, 1869, which began with this sentence :—

“ My dear Nubar :

“ In this question of judicial reform we have not, as you will know, as yet taken up the matter with America. It would be well to do so now.”¹

This was done. But it appears that Washington had already received official advice of what was transpiring. “ By the irony of fate,” writes Mr. Justice Brinton, “ the first knowledge of the projected reform received by our Government at Washington was in the shape of an appeal to the United States to lend its influence to prevent the realization of the project, presented on behalf of a nation which to-day claims as its own the venerated leader of our institution and Egypt’s foremost jurist. According to a letter

¹ *Ibid.*

addressed on 22nd December, 1867, to the American Secretary of State, the Government of Greece was of opinion that 'so important a modification, and one touching so nearly the rights of foreigners in Egypt, seems to be premature, and that too much ignorance, too much fanaticism and abuses too inveterate obtained as yet in the indigenous element for it to be called to exercise high judicial functions'." ¹

The opposition emphasized by this attitude of the Greek Government put many obstacles in the path of Nubar. He was equal to the emergency which confronted him. Always optimistic, always resourceful, and always outspoken, he kept hammering away at the Chancelleries of Europe. But the Russia of the Czars was no more part of Europe than is the Russia of the Soviets. It had a conception of duty which was not that of London. It required gold to make it amenable to reason. Its attitude called for the active efforts of Abraham Bey. A telegram was sent to him on 13th January, 1873. He was still at Constantinople. It read, in part:—

"It would be well to take £8,000 in Consols, put them in an envelope and write on it the address of General Ignatiev. Close it up with red wax, but do not use your own seal. Hand it to him saying that you received this envelope by the special boat which came to get a part of my daughter's trousseau. If he asks what is in it, say that you do not know. Avoid his opening the envelope in your presence, so that he may think that you know nothing of its contents." ²

¹ *The American Participation in the Foundation of the Mixed Courts*, by Jasper Y. Brinton, *Les Juridictions Mixtes d'Egypte*, Alexandrie, 1926, p. 73.

² Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, Abraham File, 1873.

Russia, in those days, was the champion of Orthodox Christianity. She was extremely powerful at Constantinople. She aspired to extend her empire to the Bosphorus. Her Ambassador was invariably one of the most influential men accredited to the Sublime Porte. Had he opposed judicial reform, Ismail would have been unable to realize his ambition. This General Ignatiev was the Czar's ambassador. It was thus an essential move in the Khedive's strategy to win over the Russian ambassador. Abraham went about matters in a business-like way. On 15th January he advised Ismail that he would make up the envelope as instructed and deliver it to General Ignatiev.¹

Matters moved slowly. It was 11th February before the "observer" was able to report progress. His letter ran :—

"The banker, Camara, has just told me that if we want to finish this judicial reform matter we must give him the money which he has been promised, as the thing is now almost completed, thanks to Ignatiev, who wants his £20,000. I said to him : 'It is true that I promised you money, but I did so upon two conditions : (1) that you bring me a letter from Ignatiev saying that Russia accepts all the conditions, and (2) that the affair be finished in two months.' Camara left me, and returned saying : 'I give you my word that Ignatiev has worked hard for us. It is not finished yet. It may hang on for some time unless he gets his money.'"¹

An answer came from Cairo the same day to the effect that authority had already been given to pay £8,000, and that the balance of £12,000 would be

¹ *Ibid.*

forthcoming when a letter was given by Ignatiev stating that he was empowered by his Government to agree to the proposed judicial reform. This answer received a reply from Abraham dated 13th February, which gave assurance that the £8,000 had been delivered to Ignatiev under the conditions fixed by the Khedive. 1st March showed that Camara was pressing Abraham for the Ambassador's unpaid fee of £12,000, and imparted the information that the crucial letter of acceptance was promised for that night. It was delivered, but it was what lawyers call "vague, general, and indefinite." The contents of the letter were cabled to the Khedive, and he telegraphed Abraham on 3rd March :—

"This letter is meaningless. It would be a great pity if he has received his £12,000, because he will not give a new letter without more money."¹

Abraham knew the game too well to be tricked and was able to reply :—

"Notwithstanding Camara's insistence I refused to pay the £12,000, and Ignatiev was, I fear, somewhat vexed. Camara says that he will get another letter which will be what we require and what Nubar exacts. When Nubar tells me that the letter suits, I shall pay the money."

On 11th March, Abraham reported that Camara had brought another letter and wanted Ignatiev's money. It was better than the first, but not what was desired. It was again readjusted. On 16th March it finally passed muster, and instructions were cabled from Cairo to pay the balance of £12,000. A reply of the same date contained this paragraph :—

¹ *Ibid.*

"My august master, I have paid the £12,000 to Ignatiev. He is very satisfied."¹

This pathetic story of Russian venality tells how one of the difficulties which menaced judicial reform was surmounted. There were other stumbling-blocks, but Nubar met them with the logic of a statesman and the dexterity of a diplomat. Success finally crowned his efforts. On 27th February, 1926, Egypt and the Occident celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Courts whose creation meant so much to Ismail and whose success has more than justified all the hopes that he so fondly cherished.

¹ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER XIV

THE CAVE REPORT

THIS heavy expenditure depleted Ismail's supply of ready cash. When November, 1875, reached its meridian, Lord Derby, then British Foreign Secretary, sent the following telegram to his Consul-General at Cairo :—

“Foreign Office,

“15th November, 1875.

“Her Majesty's Government have been advised that a French syndicate has offered to buy the shares in the Suez Canal Company held by the Khedive, and that it is possible that he may agree to sell. You are instructed to ascertain the facts, and to report on them.”¹

It was not because Ismail was a spendthrift that he was willing to dispose of his Suez Canal stock. He owned 176,602 shares out of a total of 400,000. But the earning capacity of these holdings, up to and including the dividend due on 1st July, 1894, was pledged to the Suez Canal to pay the indemnity due to it as a result of the award made by Napoleon III.² Not only was this stock thus unproductive, but, as the result of a resolution of a general meeting of the shareholders held on 24th August, 1871, it was deprived of its voting power until the complete payment of the entire debt due to the Company.³

¹ Quoted from French text reproduced in *L'Achat des Actions de Suez* par Charles Lesage, Paris (Librairie Plon), 1906, p. 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

The effect of this decision was that the Khedive, who owned practically two-fifths of the stock of the *Compagnie Universelle*, found that he had no voice in the administration of a Company for which he had done so much and in which he was such an important shareholder. He protested against this decision, which he considered both inequitable and illegal. "But," says Lesage in his masterly monograph, "Ismail, in order to avoid a conflict, agreed to give M. Ferdinand de Lesseps a power of attorney to vote his stock."¹ In other words, after Napoleon III had given a decision which has been severely criticized by impartial observers, the general meeting of 24th August, 1871, passed a resolution of doubtful legality, and when Ismail refused to be bound by such a high-handed measure, he was hoaxed into giving Ferdinand de Lesseps a mandate to act as his agent. This was tantamount to forcing him to ratify what had been done by the shareholders.

The sum and substance of all these concomitant circumstances was that the Khedive felt that he had been badly treated, and that it was worth his while to divest himself of an investment that was destined to remain unproductive until 1st July, 1894. Besides, he did not relish the humiliation of seeing Ferdinand de Lesseps acting as lord and master of those 176,602 shares. The price offered, viewed in the light of conditions obtaining in 1875, was quite a liberal one. Ismail's acceptance of the terms submitted to him was, from his point of view, an excellent piece of business. It gave him cash and wiped out the humiliation involved in the voting of his stock by Ferdinand de Lesseps.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

The Suez Canal Company had been most unfriendly to the Khedive in depriving his shares of their voting power. It is obvious that Ismail's sale to the British Government transferred to London no greater rights than those which had been vested in Ismail. But the *Compagnie Universelle* dared not apply to the new owner the technical ruling which had been invoked against the vendor. Its legality was doubtful, and Disraeli refused to be bound by it.

It appears that, according to article 51 of the Statutes of the Canal Company, every owner of twenty-five shares was entitled to one vote, but no shareholder was allowed more than one vote, however great might be his holding. This had been originally provided for in order to demonstrate to the world that Muhammad Said would not be able to dictate the policy of the enterprise. When the Viceroy turned over to the purchaser his stock certificates, two questions were presented. The first was, Is the ruling valid which deprives Ismail's shares of all voting power until 1894? The second was, Is it true, in law, that these 176,602 shares may cast but 10 votes?

Counsel learned in the law were consulted and ruled that :—

“the severance of the coupons has not weakened the shareholders' rights to the property of the Company. . . . Those who contend that the severance of the coupons from the shares debars the shareholders from having any voice in the affairs of the Company for so long as the shares remain without available coupons, take a position opposed to the commonsense view of the transaction. . . . As the shares are now the property not of a person but of a nation, the article

of the Statutes which limits the owner of these shares to ten votes does not apply to the case of a nation."¹

It may, perhaps, be argued that this reasoning is not absolutely convincing. But M. de Lesseps and his associates appear to have yielded to it. They cannot be blamed for accepting the realities of life, but their attitude, taken as a whole, tends to show that Ismail found himself in such an uncongenial environment in 1875 that he may well have welcomed the opportunity of ending his intimate association with an enterprise which was in the hands of men who had ceased to be friendly to him. His 15 per cent participation in the net profits of the waterway still assured him a share in all its eventual earnings. That factor was of primary importance to him, as it guaranteed to Egypt a proportion of the bountiful profits which he foresaw and, at the same time, saved him from the humiliation which cut him to the quick.

The proposition called to Lord Derby's attention on 16th November was definitely closed, and the money paid out by the Rothschilds on 25th November. But the £3,976,583 thus realized afforded only temporary relief. Not only had Ismail been spending money at far too rapid a pace for this sum to be of any permanent significance, but Turkish and Egyptian securities ran into a "Black Friday" on 5th October, 1875. The cause of this panic was an announcement made by the Sublime Porte that during the five years beginning 1st January, 1876, the interest on the Turkish debt would be paid half in cash and half in bonds bearing five per cent interest.

Three days after the crash on the Stock Exchange

¹ Hallberg, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

the British Consul-General at Cairo advised Lord Derby of the desire expressed by the Khedive of

“securing the services of some competent Government official thoroughly acquainted with the system followed in Her Majesty’s Treasury, to assist his Minister of Finance in remedying the confusion which His Highness admitted existed in that department of Administration”.

In due course, a body of experts, under the chairmanship of Sir Stephen (then Mr.) Cave, Her Britannic Majesty’s Paymaster-General, came to Cairo and went over the Khedive’s books. The account of the stewardship of this Commission is what is known as the Cave Report. It is the document which Sir Auckland Colvin, Viscount Milner, and the Earl of Cromer have converted into a club with which to knock Ismail into insensibility. But careful analysis of its contents turns it into a boomerang.

The substance of the Report is boiled down into one sentence. It is its concluding paragraph. Its exact words are :—

“We gather from all the information that we have been able to obtain that Egypt is well able to bear the charge of the whole of her present indebtedness at a reasonable rate of interest ; but she cannot go on renewing floating debts at 25 per cent, and raising fresh loans at 12 or 13 per cent interest to meet this addition to her debt, which do not bring in a single piastre to her Exchequer.”¹

Extracts from the Report have already been quoted, containing such a statement as :—

“These statistics show that the country has made

¹ McCoan, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

progress in every way under its present ruler ; but, notwithstanding that progress, its present financial position is, for the reasons that have already been stated, very critical. Still the expenditure, though heavy, would not of itself have produced the present crisis, which may be attributed almost entirely to the ruinous conditions of loans raised for pressing requirements, due in some cases to causes over which the Khedive had little control.”¹

In another part of the report, not yet quoted, Sir Stephen Cave said :—

“ This unfortunate position is due in great measure to the onerous conditions of the Loan of 1873, which was contracted for the express purpose of clearing off the floating debt amounting at that time to £28,000,000. By these conditions the nominal amount of £32,000,000 was reduced to an apparent effective of £20,740,000, of which £9,000,000 were paid in the bonds of the floating debt. These bonds, purchased by the contractors at a heavy discount, and sometimes at a price as low as 65 per cent, were paid into the Treasury at 93 per cent, an operation which materially enhanced the profits accruing to the negotiators of the loan.”²

The trouble, as pointed out by the Cave Report, was not only that the bondholders drove most severe bargains, but also that

“ The Khedive has evidently attempted to carry out with a limited revenue, in the course of a few years, works which ought to be spread over a far longer period and which would tax the resources of much richer exchequers.”³

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 392.

² *Ibid.*, p. 396.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

Sir Samuel Baker expressed this same thought in different words when he said :—

“Ismail Pasha was in advance of his age. He resolved upon the rapid accomplishment of a work that would require many years of patient and gradual labour. He determined to connect the Sudan by railway with Lower Egypt, and thus to open those hitherto excluded tracts of fertile country to the commerce of the world. His plan embraced vast projects. . . . His reign was a gallop at full speed. He was the moving spirit of progress.”¹ And again :—

“These great works emanated from the brain of Ismail Pasha, who accomplished in seventeen years more than had been achieved in Egypt since the days of the Arab conquest.”²

The American Consul-General, whose report has frequently been referred to, agreed, in substance, with Sir Stephen Cave, for he advised his Government that

“At any moment, Egypt can recover herself by stopping her extraordinary expenditure on public works and internal improvements and practising ordinary economy.”³

Here are some of the figures given by the Cave Report to support its inference that the bondholders bled the Khedive and to back up its affirmation that “Egypt is well able to bear the whole of

¹ *The Reform of Egypt*, by Sir Samuel Baker, *The Fortnightly Review*, November, 1882, p. 537.

² *Sir Samuel Baker, A Memoir*, by T. Douglas Murray and Sylvia White, London (Macmillan & Company), 1895, p. 283.

³ Archives American Legation, Cairo, Official Correspondence, 1869-1873, p. 468.

her present indebtedness at a reasonable rate of interest " :—

<i>Year</i>	<i>Amount of Loan</i>	<i>Amount received</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
	£	£	
1864	5,704,200	4,864,063	
1865	3,000,000	2,640,000	
1866	3,000,000	3,000,000	No particulars of amount realized, but probably the whole.
1867	2,080,000	2,080,000	
1868	11,890,000	7,193,334	
1873	32,000,000	20,740,077	
1870	7,142,860	5,000,000 ¹	

There is one thing about this table that jars upon the layman. It is that statement under the heading "remarks", which, in dealing with the 1866-7 loans, conveys the information: "no particulars of amount realized, but probably the whole." Such language is hardly what one would have expected from expert accountants. It is generally supposed that when they report upon a set of books the word "probably" is deleted from their vocabulary. They are expected to state facts and not to indulge in surmises. The unusual phraseology of the Cave Report is possibly due to the fact that the accounts of the Egyptian Government previous to 1876 were not only in a chaotic state, but, being kept in Arabic by Coptic book-keepers, were practically undecipherable by English mathematicians who know nothing of Arabic numerals or of Arabic writing or of the complications of Coptic accountancy.

But, be all this as it may, the general picture drawn by the Cave Report is favourable to Ismail. It was not published when completed. This was because

¹ Cave Report, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

both the British Government and the Khedive looked upon it as being a confidential document intended only for the English Foreign Office and for the Egyptian authorities. Financiers are both temperamental and nervous. They had expected that the report would be printed and divulged. When this was not done their imaginations began to work. They took steps to have questions asked in the House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli, speaking on behalf of Her Britannic Majesty's Cabinet, replied, in perfect good faith, that he had no objection to publishing the Report, but that as the Khedive had not authorized its issue Her Majesty's Government did not feel that they could do so.

This answer was construed on the Stock Exchange as implying that Ismail was afraid of the Report. Such was not what Mr. Disraeli had said or meant. But the value of Egyptian securities broke as a result of the construction thus placed upon the Khedive's attitude. When the document was published ten days later the harm had already been done. The public had made up its mind. It is probable that the Report was read by very few persons. Financiers study such papers. The man in the street does not. Bankers and brokers were not interested in stressing the point that Sir Stephen Cave had said that usurers were driving Egypt to the wall and that "the country has made great progress in every way under its present ruler". But it must be assumed that Lord Cromer and the other authors who agree with him have read the Cave Report. They appear, however, to have done so without appreciating its true significance.

Take, for example, that excerpt which is quoted

in *Modern Egypt* which has already been cited several times in these pages, and which reads :—

“Two striking features stand out in this balance, namely, that the sum raised by revenue, £94,281,401, is little less than that spent on administration, tribute to the Porte, works of unquestionable utility and certain expenses of questionable utility or policy, in all amounting to £97,240,966, and that for the present large amount of indebtedness there is absolutely nothing to show but the Suez Canal, the whole proceeds of the loans and floating debt having been absorbed in payment of interest and sinking funds, with the exception of the sum debited to that great work.”

Immediately preceding this paragraph the Cave Report contains these facts and figures :—

“The debtor and creditor account of the State from 1864 to 1875 stands thus :—

“RECEIPTS		£
“By revenue		94,281,401
“Loans		31,713,987
“Sale of Suez Canal shares		3,976,583
“Floating debt		18,243,076
		<hr/>
		148,215,047
“EXPENDITURE		
“Administration		48,868,491
“Tribute to the Porte		7,592,872
“Works of utility		30,240,058
“Extraordinary expenses—some of unquestionable utility and others under pressure of interested parties		10,539,545
“Interests and sinking funds . . .		34,898,962
“Suez Canal		16,075,119
		<hr/>
		£148,215,047”

Had Lord Cromer analysed these figures, which were staring him in the face when he copied the paragraph above quoted, his logical mind would have been struck by the fact that the item "Loans £31,713,987", entered under the heading "Receipts", obviously called for an explanation. It was too insignificant an amount to represent the sum total of the funded debts of so systematic a borrower as Ismail. Had the significance of this factor been appreciated by this most severe critic he would have found it extremely difficult to understand this entry of "Loans £31,713,987". It obviously meant that Ismail had received that amount from his various loans. Yet a few lines earlier in the same Report appear, in the column "Amount realized", various details which demonstrate that Sir Stephen Cave and his associates declare that Ismail had received from his Loans an aggregate sum of £45,517,474.

Lord Cromer should have been all the more reluctant to have accepted either of these two sums because he writes in *Modern Egypt* :—

"In 1876 the funded debt of Egypt, including the Daira loans, amounted to £68,110,000. In addition to this, there was a floating debt of about £26,000,000."¹

These two amounts just quoted challenge the facts submitted by Sir Stephen Cave, for his Report, which goes down to the end of 1875, fixes the total of the Loans at £64,817,060 and the Floating Debt at £18,243,076.

It is thus obvious that Lord Cromer refused to

¹ Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol i, p. 11.

accept the figures of the Cave Report both for the aggregate amount of the Loans and the sum-total of the Floating Debt. Had he pressed his investigations a bit further he would have found, first of all, that there must have been an error in the expenditure of £16,075,119 entered against the item "Suez Canal". This mistake has already been brought out in a preceding chapter. Suffice it to say that the magnitude of the amount should have evoked his curiosity. This is said because the entire capital of the Suez Canal Company totalled but £8,000,000. The condemnation pronounced against Ismail by Napoleon III, great though it was, equalled but £3,360,000. And as these two amounts form a total of only £11,360,000, a point of interrogation would obviously have been pressed home upon Lord Cromer had his absolute sincerity and preconceived ideas not restrained him from doing a little figuring of his own.

This overcrediting of Ismail's account breaks up the entire balance-sheet. It does so all the more effectively, because had Lord Cromer's imagination been allowed full sway and had he not permitted himself to be influenced by the solemnity of the masses of figures marshalled by the expert accountants, he would have known that £30,240,058 plus £10,539,545 were obviously less than the amount that Ismail had put into public works, good, bad, and indifferent. These two sums aggregate but £40,779,603. The Khedive's building operations, covering a period of thirteen years, would appear to have called for a more impressive figure than that mentioned, even if the collateral value of the outlay may have been but little. In other words, just as the £16,075,119 "Suez

Canal " entry stands out as being disproportionately large, so do these " Public Works " items seem, almost at first blush, far too modest to harmonize with the picture of Ismail painted in *Modern Egypt*.

The truth of the matter has already been brought out in these pages. It is that Sir Stephen Cave and his associates found themselves face to face with a cryptic system of books kept in a language and in numerals with which they were unacquainted and so obviously unintelligible to them that they were groping in the dark. They did not have the time to do a proper job of auditing. Here are certain facts which drive home this point. It was on 8th October, 1875, that the British Consul-General sent the dispatch to London that brought about the creation of the Cave Commission. A few days elapsed before the Commissioners were chosen. They had to pack their portmanteaux and travel all the way to Cairo. They had to be entertained before they began to work. Their report is dated London, 23rd March, 1876.

Edward Dicey, who has written the colourful *Story of the Khedivate*, explains why the Cave Report lacks the methodical thoroughness of an analysis submitted by a certified public accountant. He records :—

"The Palace of the Foresteria in the Shoubra Road—then the fashionable promenade of Cairo—the residence usually reserved for royal visitors to Egypt, was made ready for his (Cave's) reception. . . . I fancy that on his arrival in Egypt he contemplated a far more prolonged and exhaustive study of the subject he was sent to investigate. But after a few weeks' sojourn he came—or at any rate professed to have come—to the conclusion, that his report must

be based on the information supplied to him by the Khedive, the Mufettish and the officials of the Egyptian Treasury, and that he had neither the time nor the means of testing the accuracy of the information thus supplied. . . . He left Egypt after only a few weeks' sojourn." ¹

The Cave Commission dealt with complicated accounts kept by Coptic scribes according to a more or less secret system of book-keeping handed down from father to son. The translation of the data required by these experts would obviously have required many weeks. It is thus not surprising that their Report contains such a statement as :—

"A return furnished by the Minister of Finance sets the amount paid for interest and sinking funds of the public loans to the end of 1875 at £29,590,994. According to the same return, the revenue received from 1864 to 1875 inclusive amounted to £94,281,401." ²

This means that what historians have accepted, in good faith, as an auditor's report based upon careful examination of the Khedive's books, turns out to be a general sketch of conditions predicated, at all events, in part, upon information received and not upon facts dug out of the Khedive's books.

With these general observations thus stressed it is not difficult to understand why the Cave Report has failed to record under the caption "Expenditures on Public Works" such elements as :—

	£
Nile Canals.	12,600,000
Bridges	2,150,000
The various sums set forth in Chapter IX	17,259,835

¹ Dicey, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

² Cave Report, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

These three headings account for £32,009,835. This figure, added to the £40,779,603 referred to in the Cave Report, produces a total of £72,789,438, or a sum worthy of Ismail. It almost appeals to one's sense of the ridiculous for the Khedive to be featured as "as fine a type of the spendthrift as can well be found, whether in history or fiction" and then to read official information putting his expenditure upon a basis worthy of a Russian captain but not of a Russian field-marshal.

The facts in regard to the Khedive's receipts down to 1875 which escaped the members of the Cave Commission, but which are brought out in the Mulhall article on Egyptian finance, and which are established by an official register in the possession of the Egyptian *Caisse de la Dette Publique*, are as follows :—

" Date	Bank	Nominal £	Net Product £
1864	Goschen . .	5,704,000	4,864,000
1865	Anglo-Egyptian .	3,387,000	2,750,000
1866	Goschen . .	3,000,000	2,640,000
1867	Imperial Ottoman	2,080,000	1,700,000
1868	Oppenheim .	11,890,000	7,193,000
1870	Bischoffsheim .	7,143,000	5,000,000
1873	Oppenheim .	32,000,000	17,810,000
		<hr/> £65,204,000	<hr/> £41,957,000" ¹

The story told by these figures is that the bankers exacted a toll of £23,247,000 on aggregate loans of £65,204,000. This is a rather heavy discount, particularly as all these loans, except that of 1865, bore 7 per cent interest per annum. That issue called for 9 per cent. The effect of this juggling with figures was, as the Cave Report expresses it,

¹ Mulhall, *op. cit.*, p. 526.

"That none of the Egyptian loans cost less than 12 per cent per annum, while some cost more than 13½ per annum, and the railway loan even 26·9 per annum, including sinking funds." ¹

But these considerations are foreign to the matter at present under inquiry. What is now relevant is the fact that these various loans, hard bargains though they may have been, put into Ismail's pocket a net sum of £41,957,000, or £10,243,013 more than the sum of £31,713,987 mentioned in the Cave Report immediately preceding the language quoted in *Modern Egypt*. It thus follows that Ismail's receipts for the period from 1864–1875, that chosen by the Cave Report, may be fixed at :—

	£
Revenue, as established by Sir Stephen	
Cave and Lord Cromer	94,281,401
Sale of Suez Canal shares	3,976,583
Loans (Amount realised)	41,957,000
Floating debt as established by Lord	
Cromer	26,000,000

These four headings create a grand total of £166,214,984 for which Ismail may be summoned to account at the bar of history for his administration of Egypt during the years running from 1864 to 1875. The Cave Report was far less exigent. It limited his responsibility to £148,215,047.

On the other side of the Balance-sheet must now be arrayed :—

	£
Expenses of Administration as fixed by the Cave	
Report and as accepted by Lord Cromer . .	48,868,491
Tribute to Porte	7,592,872

¹ Cave Report, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

£

Public Works including Nile Canals and Bridges omitted from Cave Report and sums detailed in Chapter IX	72,789,438
Interest and sinking funds as fixed by Cave Report and as accepted by Lord Cromer	34,898,962
Suez Canal, as properly readjusted	6,770,000
Expenses Baker Expedition as fixed by Oppenheim Report ¹	474,063
Present of man-of-war to Sultan ²	289,421

No mention is here made of the expenses of the Abyssinian war. This omission is due to the fact that one of the entries in the Cave Report, while fixing the sum at £1,000,000, seems to imply that it is carried under the head of "floating debts". But even with this factor eliminated the total accounted for runs to £171,683,247, and does not include the cost of the Gordon expeditions or of the Juba River campaign.

This figure reads like a *reductio ad absurdum* when it is confronted with total receipts of but £166,214,984. The problem with which the inquiring mind is thus confronted is not to refute Lord Cromer's statement that "the whole of the borrowed money, except £16,000,000 spent on the Suez Canal, was squandered". It is to account for what the French so aptly call an *embarras de richesse*.

The explanation is, perhaps, that both the Cave Commission and Lord Cromer were led into error by the figures for revenue which were submitted by the Mufettish, Ismail Sadiq Pasha. They were not checked by the expert accountants. They do not

¹ *Notes sur le Budget Egyptian pendant l'année 1873/1874*, par Henri Oppenheim, Paris (Imprimerie et Librairie administrative de Paul Dupont), 1874, p. 43.

² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

appear to have consulted source material. They seem to have accepted with an innocence and amiability not consonant with the attitude of modern certified accountants what the Minister of Finance told them about so fundamental a problem. And they gave evidence of similar faith in what was reported to them by the same official in respect of sums paid for Interest and Sinking Funds.

These two suppositions are so far-reaching in their effect that it may be well to reproduce a few lines from the Cave Report which have already been quoted in this chapter. They read :—

“ A Return furnished by the Minister of Finance sets the amount paid for interest and sinking funds of the public loans to the end of 1875 at £29,570,994.

“ According to the same Return, the revenue from 1864 to 1875 inclusive amounted to £94,281,401.”

Not only did faith, not auditing, write these two important entries into the Cave Report, but there is no way of finding out the origin of the important “ Expenditure ” credit of £48,868,491.

It would appear, but this deduction is advanced with hesitation, that this figure was also given by Ismail Sadiq Pasha. We say this because immediately following the statement that the Khedive's revenue amounted to £94,281,401, we read :—

“ During the same period the expenses of administration, including Tribute to Constantinople, were £56,461,363.”

The next paragraph fixes the Tribute at £7,592,872. This reduces the expenses of Administration to a net sum of £48,868,491. But nowhere is the legitimate curiosity of the student satisfied in regard to the

meaning conveyed by so comprehensive a term as "Expenses of Administration". Charity covers a multitude of sins, but it does not embrace any more possibilities than does such an indefinite heading as "Expenses of Administration". And how much was spent in 1864 and how much in 1874? There is no way of telling. This lacuna is probably due to the inaccuracy of the data turned in by the Minister of Finance and blindly accepted by the Cave Commission.

The conclusion which flows from all these various facts is that the evidence upon which Ismail has been condemned does not indubitably establish, even approximately, how much money he handled. And it does not permit the historian to know just how much was paid out for useful public works, scientific expeditions and wars, not to speak of judicial reform. We stress this point because it is possible that certain of the elements which went into the expenditures detailed in Chapter IX may have been already accounted for under that indefinite heading "Expenses of Administration".

But whatever may be the truth in regard to all these matters, the dominant message of the Cave Report is that it was incumbent upon the bankers to loosen their grip upon Egypt and to give up their pound of flesh if the country was expected to prosper. Here is how Sir Stephen Cave expressed this wish:—

"It may be expected that if the gravity of the situation is explained to the bondholders, they will consent to an arrangement for securing to them a fair return on their money, and saving them from the heavy loss inseparable from a financial collapse."¹

¹ Cave Report, *op. cit.*, p. 400.

CHAPTER XV

THE GOSCHEN MISSION

BANKERS had lent money to the Khedive in 1866 and the subsequent years at burdensome prices. But in the latter part of 1875 he passed into the hands of bill-brokers. They discounted his Treasury notes at what Lord Cromer calls "ruinous rates of interest".¹ On 8th April, 1876, the crash came. Ismail suspended payment of this paper.

Before this break, there had been some discussion of the creation of an Egyptian National Bank, to be controlled by three European commissioners. Paris and Rome agreed to appoint a commissioner, but London refused. Lord Derby, then British Foreign Secretary, took up the position that to designate an English commissioner would be intruding in the internal affairs of Egypt. This he refused to do.

The subject was dropped on England assuming this attitude ; but it was revived in a different form when the default of 8th April, 1876, brought matters to a crisis. A khedivial decree was issued on 2nd May, instituting a Commission of the Public Debt. Certain specific duties were assigned to the commissioners, but their outstanding mandate was to act as representatives of the bondholders. On 7th May a further decree was promulgated, consolidating the debt of Egypt, which then amounted, according to Lord Cromer, to £91,000,000.²

¹ Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 12.

² *Ibid.*

M. de Blignières, Herr von Kremer, and Signor Baravelli were appointed as representatives of France, Austria, and Italy. The British Government refused to select a delegate. But the financial arrangements embodied in the decree of 7th May caused dissatisfaction in Europe, and particularly in England. Mr. (subsequently Lord) Goschen was deputed to go to Egypt with a view to obtaining some modification of the decree which the bondholders considered necessary. French creditors appointed M. Joubert as their spokesman. The two envoys reached Cairo in October, 1876. The result of their efforts was a decree dated 18th November, 1876.

Nothing will be said here as to the purely financial arrangements negotiated by Lord Goschen and M. Joubert. They were far less important than the changes which, under their advice, the Khedive introduced into the administration of the country. It was explained to him that in order to put his finances into proper shape it was necessary that he should appoint two Controllers-General, one to supervise the revenue and the other the expenditure. It was also made clear to him that it would be advisable that the railways and the port of Alexandria should be administered by a Board composed of two Englishmen, a Frenchman, and two Egyptians.

Under this arrangement Mr. Romaine, an Englishman, became Controller-General of Revenue and Baron de Molaret, a Frenchman, Controller-General of Expenditure. General Marriott was appointed President of the Railway Board. But the British Foreign Office did not appoint these Englishmen. On the contrary, the British Government made it

perfectly clear that they "could not accept any responsibility for these appointments, to which, however, they had no objection to offer". England, at the same time, again refused to nominate an English Commissioner of the Public Debt, but permitted Sir Evelyn Baring (subsequently Lord Cromer) to accept the assignment when Ismail, upon the recommendation of Sir Louis Mallet and of Lord Goschen, tendered him the appointment.

"The result of Lord Goschen's Mission," writes Lord Cromer, "was that Ismail Pasha had for the first time to deal with a small body of European officials, who were not only invested with more ample powers than any which had previously been conferred on European functionaries in Egypt, but were also of a different type from those Europeans with whom he had hitherto been generally brought in contact."¹

The men who thus entered the khedivial service were honourable officials who sought to do their duty. For a time it looked as if they might be able to work in harmony with Ismail and to gain for him the support of the bondholders. But the Fates had already registered a contrary decree. The pendulum had swung too far against him for reforms to save his sceptre.

An incident occurred during the discussions between the envoys of the financiers and the Khedive which has been interpreted by certain authors as justifying the bondholders' intransigent attitude. It is quite probably the episode which Lord Zetland had in mind when he referred to Ismail as a murderer, besides calling him a spendthrift and a thief.²

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 24.

² Zetland, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

It appears that in the decree by which he had instituted the Commission of the Public Debt, the Khedive had agreed to contract no new debts without the Commissioners' knowledge. In the course of their examination into the State accounts the envoys had, it is said, made the discovery that a number of duplicate bonds were in existence which had apparently been issued subsequent to the date when this pledge had been given. Lord Goschen asked Ismail how he could account for the existence of these duplicates. The Khedive replied that there must be a clerical error, that all financial transactions were carried on entirely by the Mufettish, Ismail Sadiq Pasha, and that instructions would be given to that Minister to call on Lord Goschen next day and explain matters. The preponderance of evidence is to the effect that Ismail Sadiq Pasha did not keep the appointment thus made with Lord Goschen, and that he disappeared from sight at the very time when he should have called upon the British financial envoy.

De Leon, the American Consul-General, gives this version of what took place :—

“In the telegrams of the London journals there appeared one morning what seemed to many a mere sensational statement—that the Khedive had personally taken the Mufettish to drive, placed him securely in custody, and that he was to be tried for high treason immediately. Those who did not know Egypt discredited the statement *in toto* ; those who knew it immediately believed the statement and foresaw the end : although not the sudden and tragic *dénouement* of what, commencing in comedy, ended swiftly in sternest tragedy.

"The next day, 15th November, 1876, the Egyptian public, which had been feasting on a thousand rumours of the most wild and improbable character concerning this event, read in the *Moniteur Egyptien*, the Government journal, the following authorized communication in French :—

" 'The ex-Minister of Finance, Ismail Sadiq Pasha, has sought to organize a plot against His Highness the Khedive, by exciting the religious sentiments of the population against the scheme proposed by Messrs. Goschen and Joubert. He has also accused the Khedive of selling Egypt to the Christians, and taken the attitude of defender of the religion of the country. These facts, revealed by the Inspector-General of the provinces, and by the reports of the police, have been confirmed by passages in a letter addressed to the Khedive himself by Sadiq Pasha, in giving his own dismissal. In presence of acts of such gravity, His Highness the Khedive caused the matter to be judged by his Privy Council, which condemned Ismail Sadiq Pasha to exile, and close confinement at Dongola.'

"The *Phare*, a semi-official journal in French, in republishing this communication the next day, added :—

" 'The ex-Minister, who had been kept on board a steamer on the river to await the decision of the Privy Council, was immediately placed on board another steamer, which left forthwith for Upper Egypt.'

"From that hour to this," continues the Consul-General, "the Mufettish has been lost to the sight of man, and a thousand and one stories of the precise

manner and time of his 'taking off', many of the wildest and most improbable character, have been circulated and credited in foreign and native circles in Egypt.

"Some time after his disappearance, a circular was sent to the foreign consuls-general, announcing the death of the ex-Minister at Dongola, accompanied by a *procès-verbal* from the governor of that province, testifying to the fact of his arrival and death, enclosing also an autopsy made by these physicians, who after *post-mortem* examination, declared that he had died a natural death from fatigue, grief, and excess."

After having thus given what he assumed to be the facts, de Leon continues :—

"But most of the Cairenes and Alexandrians shook their heads sagely over this statement, and persist in believing that the Mufettish did not survive his arrest twenty-four hours ; and that the steamer which passed up the Nile, with windows carefully nailed up looking like a floating coffin, encountered by Nile travellers, and said to be transporting the Mufettish to his place of exile in Upper Egypt, was only sent up for effect ; and contained neither the living nor the dead ex-favourite and ex-minister." ¹

General Gordon was one of those who saw this "floating coffin". He records in his journal :—

"H.H. was quite right in exiling Ismail Sadiq Pasha." ²

No attempt will be made here to say whether General Gordon was correct or incorrect in what he said. The Khedive was not dethroned on account of the Mufettish incident, any more than Napoleon

¹ De Leon, *op cit.*, p. 187.

² Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

Bonaparte was sent to St. Helena because he delivered the Duc d'Enghien to a firing squad. The Khedive's permanent place in history depends upon the accuracy or inaccuracy of Lord Cromer's charge that he "squandered" £91,000,000 in thirteen years. The true issue will not be blurred by further discussion of a factor that has nothing to do with Ismail's compulsory abdication.

This elimination of the Mufettish who, though a Muslim, appears to have dominated the Coptic bureaucracy which looked after Ismail's accounts, tended to complicate matters. It is quite probable that the men who held the key to the mysterious system of book-keeping were badly frightened and reluctant to initiate Sir Gerald Fitzgerald, who was appointed head of the Accounts Department, into the secrets of their system. Of course, the Englishman would have furrowed his way through their complicated labyrinth of figures. But he knew nothing of Arabic numerals or of Arabic letters, and therefore could not glance down a column and absorb its message as he could have done under what he would have called normal conditions. The result was that progress was very slow. But Sir Gerald Fitzgerald was equal to his task and finally overcame all difficulties.

While this efficient public servant was hammering away at his task, Ismail's creditors were growing insistent. In August, 1877, the British Consul-General, Lord Vivian, warned the Egyptian Government that the creditors

"would certainly fall back upon their indisputable right to attack the Government before the [Mixed] Tribunals. The Government will thus find themselves

confronted with a mass of legal sentences against them, which they must either satisfy in full and at once, or it must inevitably attract the serious attention of the Powers who contributed to establish the Courts of the Reform.”¹

One of the reasons which had induced Ismail to work so persistently for the creation of the Mixed Tribunals was the conditions which Lord Milner thus describes :—

“ These abuses [the privileged position of foreigners], redounding as they do to the profit of the worst sort of Europeans and quasi-European Levantines, are even now one of the severest plagues of Egypt. But in the latter days of Ismail they had grown to perfectly frightful proportions. The European concession-hunter and loan-monger, the Greek publican and pawnbroker, the Jewish and Syrian money-lender and land-grabber, who could always with ease obtain the ‘ protection ’ of some European Power, had battened on the Egyptian Treasury and the poor Egyptian cultivator to an almost incredible extent.”²

Ismail jumped out of the frying pan into the fire when he submitted the Egyptian Government to the jurisdiction of the Mixed Courts. In the old days, when concession-hunters, loan-mongers, publicans, pawnbrokers, money-lenders, and land-grabbers had the chancelleries of Europe behind them, he could attempt to drive a bargain. But when the Mixed Courts were created all these pariahs were able to obtain judgements and to demand payment with the complacent effrontery of injured

¹ Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 32.

² Milner, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

innocence. It thus came about that within less than eighteen months after the inauguration of the Mixed Tribunals, Lord Vivian was able to use the authority of these Courts to warn Ismail that his days were numbered.

The British diplomatist prophesied correctly. The creditors flocked to the Mixed Tribunals. Many of them obtained judgements against the Egyptian Government. And then the Powers applied the thumbscrews. The German Government recalled the image of the instruments of torture which are displayed at Nuremberg and "considered that the Khedive was acting in a manner which should not be allowed in refusing to pay claims when required to do so by Courts of law. The German Ambassador in London informed Lord Derby that 'Prince Bismarck wished for united action on the subject by all the Powers, if only to avoid the possibility of separate action on the part of some of them'."¹

On 1st May, 1878, a sum of £2,000,000 was due for interest on the unified debt. On 31st March only £500,000 was in the hands of the Commissioners of the Debt. The balance had to be collected in the space of a month. The Commissioners were of opinion that it would have been better not to pay this coupon. They saw that bankruptcy was approaching. They were aware that the money could not be found without collecting taxes in advance. They were opposed to such a course as being oppressive to the Egyptians and contrary to the true interests of the bondholders.

But just as Bismarck had wanted Europe to form

¹ Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 33.

a coalition against Egypt, so France now held that this coupon, due on 1st May, 1878, should be paid when the clock struck 9 a.m. on the appointed day. Here is how Lord Cromer describes what took place :—

“The cause of the bondholders was warmly espoused by the French diplomatic representative at Cairo, Baron des Michels, who turned a deaf ear to all arguments based on the necessities of the Khedive or the miseries of the Egyptian people. The result was that, on 16th April, 1878, the French Government, through their Ambassador in London, informed Lord Salisbury, who on 2nd April, 1878, succeeded Lord Derby at the Foreign Office, that there was ‘every reason to believe that the Khedive could pay the coupon, which falls due in May, if he chose to do so’. M. Waddington expressed a hope that the British Government would join the French Government in pressing for payment. Lord Vivian was accordingly instructed to act in concert with Baron des Michels on this subject.”¹

Lord Cromer frankly admits that England thus became jointly responsible with France for the oppression which necessarily accompanied the anticipatory collection of taxes. This also means that Gaul and Briton joined hands to force Ismail to pay, penny for penny, sums which were due to bondholders who, according to the Cave Report, had created the unfortunate position in which Egypt found herself. The explanation offered by the author of *Modern Egypt* for this attitude, so inconsistent with the spirit of cricket, is thus frankly given :—

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 37.

"There was evidently some special reason for so brusque a departure [by England] from the principles heretofore adopted. The Berlin Congress was then about to sit to regulate the situation arising from the recent Russo-Turkish war. Egyptian interests had to give way to broader diplomatic considerations. It was necessary to conciliate the French. The French initiative was, therefore, followed." ¹

The mechanism which was adopted to put this cynical policy into effect was worthy of a plan begotten under such conditions. Two of the most iron-fisted Pashas who could be found were sent into the provinces, accompanied by a staff of money-lenders who were prepared to buy the crop of the cultivators in advance. Nature collaborated in grinding the *fellah* to dust. There was a low Nile that year. The peasants counted, or could, at all events, have counted, upon high prices as a result of the scarcity. "In some cases perfectly authenticated," wrote Sir Alexander Baird, as quoted by Lord Cromer, "corn was sold to the merchants for 50 piastres an ardeb, which was delivered in one month's time when it was worth 120 piastres an ardeb." ¹

These tactics produced the desired result. The money was obtained. The 1st May, 1878, coupon was paid. The bondholders were happy. The world at large did not know that cruelty, of which even the Orient was ashamed, was set in motion by the Occident to convert the blood of the *fellah* into gold primarily intended for the French *bas de laine* and not unwelcome to the bankers of London and Rome and Berlin and Vienna and Amsterdam.

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 38.

Before France and England lent their moral support to practices which Lord Zetland may perhaps have had in view when he referred to Ismail's rule as "a villainous reign",¹ the Commissioners of the Debt, in a letter addressed to the Minister of Finance on 9th January, 1878, dwelt on the gravity of the situation. They suggested an inquiry. The Khedive replied declining to institute a general investigation into the finances of Egypt. He suggested that he was willing to appoint a Commission to ascertain the true amount of Egyptian revenue.

The Commissioners declined to take any part in a partial investigation. Their remonstrance was not heeded. A Khedivial Decree was issued on 27th January, 1878, instituting a Commission of Inquiry into revenue only. A further proclamation was to be made nominating the Commissioners. Europeans resident in Egypt sided with the Commissioners of the Debt. A petition was sent to the representatives of the Powers, but it was couched in terms so offensive to the Egyptian Government that the British Consul-General refused to accept it.

The Khedive did not allow all this hue and cry to stampede him into doing what he did not want to do. His main difficulty was to find competent persons to conduct the inquiry. He needed both an Englishman and a Frenchman whose names would carry weight in London and Paris. His choice fell upon Charles George Gordon and Ferdinand de Lesseps. France willingly accepted the latter. But Lord Vivian, speaking for England, pointed out that the former "with all his eminent qualities and abilities, had no experience in finance".

¹ Zetland, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

It was now that Lord Cromer and General Gordon crossed swords for the first time. They got on one another's nerves. The latter thus describes his reaction to the former :—

“When downstairs in one of the many antechambers of the palace His Highness gave me (shall I ever lodge in palaces again? I hope not!) I found Baring. Now Baring is in the Royal Artillery, while I am in the Royal Engineers! Baring was in the nursery when I was in the Crimea. He has a pretentious, grand, patronizing way about him. We had a few words together. I said: ‘I would do what His Highness asked me.’ He said: ‘It was unfair to the creditors’; and in a few moments, all was over. When oil mixes with water we will mix together.”¹

In this way Gordon tells the Khedive's side of the disagreement with the Commissioners of the Debt :—

“In February, 1878, I received at Khartum a telegram from His Highness, saying his creditors were trying to interfere with his sovereign prerogatives, and that His Highness knew no one who could assist him in the position in which he was placed but me, and ordered me to come to Cairo. I arrived there on the 7th March at 9.30 p.m. . . . Before dinner, late as it was, His Highness took me aside, and asked me to be President of an inquiry into the state of the finances of the country; but he said that the Commissioners of the *Dette* had proved so hostile to him that His Highness wished me to object to their being on the Commission of Inquiry, saying that they had written against him in the papers.”

¹ *Events in the Life of Charles George Gordon*, by Henry William Gordon, London (Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.), 1886, p. 44.

Gordon was very fond of Ismail, and sided with the Khedive in the controversy with the Commissioners. He made this perfectly clear when he said :—

“ I was angry with these Commissioners of the *Dette*, because I thought that they had been too hard on His Highness. The next day I saw Mr. Vivian, the English Consul-General, and he said, ‘ I wonder you could accept the Presidency of the Commission of Inquiry without the Commissioners of the *Dette*. ’ I said, ‘ I was free to accept or refuse. ’ I then called on the German Consul-General, and when there, the French and Austrian Consuls-General, and also Vivian came in, and attacked me for having accepted the post of President. I said, I was free, and then they said, ‘ I was risking the Khedive his throne. ’ ”

Gordon reported this conversation to Ismail. It meant that France, England, Austria, and Germany had formed a combination to force him to give in to his creditors. “ His Highness did not seem to care a bit,” is how Gordon reports the audience. “ He said he was only afraid of England, who, he was sure, would not move.”

Ismail reposed this absolute confidence in Great Britain because he knew that Englishmen are gentlemen and that gentlemen do not attack a man when he is defenceless. The Khedive had no way of knowing that “ the Berlin Conference was then about to sit to regulate the situation arising from the recent Russo-Turkish war”. He could not surmise that the traditions of centuries would have “ to give way to broader diplomatic considerations”. He thus met with what Shakespeare calls “ the most unkindest cut of all ”.

Before Ismail learnt that extraneous circumstances constrained chivalrous England to march arm-in-arm with the grasping nations of the Continent, he called one of his staff and said :—

“Telegraph to Goschen : ‘Gordon is charged with the whole affair ; arrange with him.’”

“Consequently,” reveals Gordon’s journal, “I telegraphed to Goschen : ‘I have recommended His Highness to suspend the payment of the next coupon, in order to pay the *employés* and meet pressing claims. I will arrange with you for the Commission of Inquiry into the finances.’ Goschen answered : ‘I will not look at you ; the matter is in the hands of Her Majesty’s Government.’ I then wrote to His Highness and proposed he should suspend the payment of the coupon, and pay the *employés* and pressing claims, that he should do it by decree, quote me and throw all the blame upon me.”

Gordon says that “the English Consul-General was on the *qui vive* ; he knew that some strong measure was in prospect, and telegraphed to Her Majesty’s Government begging the same to authorize him to join the French Consul-General to stop His Highness taking any sharp measures. Of course, Vivian pointed out the red nature of your humble servant. Lord Derby, against anything abrupt, telegraphed to Vivian, who came to me and said, ‘I have a telegram and I will read it to you ; but you are not to say anything about it until I have communicated it to His Highness, for it would not be proper.’ The telegram ran thus : ‘You are authorized, in connection with your French colleague, to inform His Highness that Her Majesty’s

Government trusts His Highness will do nothing without accordance with his creditors.' ”

The upshot was that Ismail was forced to throw Gordon overboard, and to bow to men whose attitude would have made Shylock feel a keen sense of inferiority. Thus was the scene set for the Inquiry into the Egyptian Debt.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

THE committee appointed by Ismail as the result of the pressure put upon him by Europe was composed of MM. Ferdinand de Lesseps, President, Rivers Wilson and Riaz Pasha, Vice-Presidents, and MM. Baravelli, Baring, de Blignières, and von Kremer. Thus in this group of seven there were two Frenchmen, two Englishmen, one Italian, one Austrian, and but one Egyptian. They held their first meeting on 13th April, 1878.

The minutes set forth that the original intention of the Khedive was to commit this inquiry to MM. Gordon and de Lesseps, but that His Highness subsequently decided to enlarge its scope and to appoint a commission of seven members.¹ The body thus created went to work without loss of time. During the early days of August it submitted a provisional report which set forth various reforms of primary importance and stressed the fact that the principle of ministerial responsibility had to be enforced.

Ismail may have been reluctant to accept these recommendations, but when he finally did so he expressed his adherence in no uncertain terms. He said to Sir Rivers Wilson on 23rd August, 1878 :—

“ I accept the recommendation which you have made. It is perfectly natural that I should do so. It is I who wanted this work done for the good of the

¹ *Procès verbal de la Séance du 13 Avril, 1878.*

country. It is now incumbent upon me to apply these recommendations. I am resolved to do so. Be convinced of this. My country is no longer in Africa. We now form part of Europe. We must abandon the old false notions and adopt a new system consonant with our new status. We must not indulge in idle words. We must face stern realities. To begin with, and to show how far I have decided to go, I have directed Nubar Pasha to constitute a Ministry.”¹

Five days later the Khedive wrote Nubar Pasha authorizing him to form a Ministry. The letter by which the Muslim sovereign gave this mandate to an Armenian Christian laid down the principle of ministerial responsibility. It brought out the fact that the voice of the majority was to decide any question brought before the Cabinet. The chief officials of the State were to be named by the Khedive acting on the advice of his Council of Ministers. Nubar Pasha took the portfolios of Foreign Affairs and of Justice. He gave the Ministry of the Interior to Riaz Pasha and that of Finance to Sir Rivers Wilson. He made M. de Blignières his Minister of Public Works.

On 29th October a khedivial decree was issued transferring to the State most of the properties which had hitherto belonged to the Khedivial family. A loan of £8,500,000 was raised on these holdings. It was negotiated at 73. The rate of interest was 7 per cent. The sinking fund was 1 per cent. The Rothschilds took the bonds. They netted the Egyptian Government £5,992,000,² that is to say, less in proportion than any of the old loans, except the Oppenheim

¹ Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 62.

² Mulhall, *op. cit.*, p. 526.

issue of 1873 which had been floated at 70. Not only did the bankers thus exact a toll of £2,508,000 for advancing £8,500,000 at 7 per cent, secured by properties which Lord Cromer's prudent administration of Egyptian affairs was destined to make worth far more than the amount of the loan, but they exacted that the lands hypothecated to them should be administered by a Commission composed of an Egyptian, an Englishman, and a Frenchman.

The new Ministers had a difficult task before them. The Nile was unpropitious. The superstitious claimed that it protested against the appointment of an Armenian Christian as Prime Minister as well as against the choice of the two European Christian Ministers. While ignorance was thus filling the country with rumours, money was not coming into the Treasury. £443,000 was due on 15th October, 1878, and £2,000,000 more on 1st November. To meet these requirements the Exchequer had, at the end of August, but £442,000.

The Commissioners of the Debt eased the situation somewhat by temporarily suspending the sinking fund of the Unified Debt. A sum of £1,260,000 was taken from the proceeds of the loan recently negotiated with the Rothschilds. The October and November commitments were thus met. But the spring engagements drew nearer and nearer, and the outlook for them blacker and blacker. The Ministry did its utmost to carry its burden. It had the great advantage of the warm support of the French and British Governments. But, somehow or other, Paris and London became convinced that the Khedive was not giving the Cabinet his whole-hearted support. A letter

addressed by Lord Salisbury to Lord Vivian brought out this feeling :—

“ Her Majesty’s Government have full confidence in the resources of the country, and entertain no doubts as to the results of the new system, if it is only allowed to have a fair trial. But, if it be opposed by those in power, or should they even show a disposition to throw discredit upon it, the difficulties of Nubar Pasha and his advisers will be enormously increased, and the responsibility for their failure will involve its promoters in the disastrous consequences that must follow.”¹

When this message was submitted to the Khedive he showed evident signs of great annoyance. He regretted that Her Majesty’s Government should have thought it necessary to use language to him which he thought undeserved and unjust. The responsibility which it was sought to throw upon him was, Ismail thought, neither reasonable nor logical. “What was his position in Egypt? He had deliberately accepted the position of a constitutional ruler and a responsible Ministry had been formed to advise him. If he rightly understood the first principles of constitutional government, it was that Ministers, and not the Chief of State, were made responsible. He must decline to meddle with the functions of his Ministers. His advice or opinion was at their disposal if they chose to ask for it, but he could not thrust it upon them unasked. If the Ministers were not responsible for their own acts, what was the meaning of a responsible Ministry? Responsibility, he thought, would only attach to him if he attempted to interfere

¹ Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 66.

in the government of the country. Otherwise he must disclaim it."

It is in these words, so characteristic of his inborn sense of fair play, that Lord Cromer brings out Ismail's reply to the strictures of Downing Street. *Modern Egypt* also sets forth this answer to the Khedive's argument :—

"To all of this sophistry Lord Vivian replied, with obvious good sense, that 'His Highness must remember that, although he had surrendered his personal power, and a constitutional regime was established in Egypt, the new order of things was in its infancy, and it was rather too early for the strict application of the doctrine of constitutional government as understood in Europe. His Highness had still all the prestige and influence of the chief of an Eastern state, combined with greater knowledge and experience of Egypt than those of any other person. What Her Majesty's Government desired was that, instead of showing indifference, coolness, or even dislike to the new order of things, he should place all his knowledge, influence, and experience at the disposal of his Ministers, and loyally and cordially co-operate with them within the proper sphere of his prerogative'." ¹

The Khedive's reaction to this criticism was quite clear. It was to this effect :—

"The British and French Governments have more or less forced constitutional government upon Egypt. I had to comply with their wishes. They applauded me when I said 'my country is no longer in Africa. We now form part of Europe'. I shall now stand aside

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 67.

while the game of constitutional government is being played. I know my own country better than these Englishmen and Frenchmen, but I am willing to give them a chance to prove that I am wrong. If constitutional government is going to be tried, it must be thoroughly constitutional."

There were two ways of facing the situation created by this attitude. "One," writes Lord Cromer, "was to exclude the Khedive altogether from the meetings of the Council of Ministers, to treat him as a cipher, and to endeavour to govern the country, not only without his co-operation, but often in a manner which was diametrically opposed to his personal wishes and opinions. This system, which involved pushing the principle of ministerial responsibility to its extreme logical limit, was advocated by Nubar Pasha, who was supported by Sir Rivers Wilson. . . . The alternative system, which was supported by Lord Vivian, was less theoretically perfect, but was in a greater degree based on the actual circumstances then existing in Egypt. . . . The only system which presented a chance of success was not to put the Khedive on one side altogether, but to invite his co-operation, whilst at the same time the exercise of his authority would be controlled." ¹

While Lord Vivian held tenaciously to this point of view he was not in a position to give immediate effect to it. Everybody was dissatisfied. Nubar said "We are turning in a vicious circle". The Khedive complained that the anomalous position in which it was sought to place him was daily becoming more and more intolerable. He observed that it was

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 70.

outrageous that the British and French Governments held him personally responsible for measures about which his Ministers did not consult him. And the populace grew restless when its religious prejudice was appealed to and the old Turkish saying was drummed into its ears : " When an Armenian rules, the State declines."

The British Consul-General blamed the Khedive for the unrest which spread through the country. His report to London said :—

" There is a certain amount of fermentation in the country, as evidenced by the arrival of large deputations of sheikhs from the provinces to protest against any pressure for the payment of taxes at this moment. . . . If this fermentation were natural it would not be an unhealthy symptom, but I have good reason to suspect that it has been secretly fomented by agents probably employed by the Khedive." ¹

Whether Ismail really prompted these provincial sheikhs " to protest against any pressure for the payment of taxes at this moment ", or whether they were spontaneously aroused to action by a recollection of what " two of the most iron-fisted Pashas who could be found " had done to carry out the attitude which France had forced upon the Commissioners of the debt the previous year, may well be an open question. The probabilities are that these sheikhs felt their way before coming to Cairo. When their subterranean sources of information told them that the Khedive would not oppose them, they arrived in great numbers. But farmers do not have to be pressed very hard to oppose the payment of taxes. This is as true in

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 73.

France as it is in Egypt. It is as true to-day as it was in 1878.

But whatever may have been the cause of this restlessness, it undoubtedly added to the difficulties of the task confronting the Ministry presided over by an Armenian Christian and containing a Frenchman and an Englishman. The discontent spread to the army. Hitherto Egypt had suffered solely from fiscal worries. Public tranquillity had been preserved. The security which had reigned was now disturbed.

One of the main reasons why the discontent spread to the officers of the army was the non-payment of their salaries. Just as the anticipatory collection of taxes by "iron-fisted pashas" had put the peasants in a frame of mind to oppose the payment of taxes, so did the non-payment of the salaries of these officers tend to make them disgruntled. The Nubar Ministry decided to pay a portion of the arrears due. But, at the same time, a large number of officers were placed on half-pay. "This measure would, under any circumstances, have been considered harsh, however necessary it might have been in view of the straitened condition of the Egyptian Treasury. It was, however, harsh and impolitic to dismiss so large a body of officers without, in the first place, fully liquidating the arrears of pay due to them. The result was that many officers and their families were reduced to a state of complete destitution."¹

When this measure was put into effect there were about 500 officers in Cairo. At this moment, as Lord Vivian reported to London,

"by an unparalleled act of folly, the Minister of

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 74.

War summoned the remaining 2,000 officers up to Cairo from various parts of the country to receive a portion of their arrears of pay and to deposit their arms with the authorities. He thus grouped together a seething mass of 2,500 discontented officers, the garrison of Cairo consisting only of 2,600 troops, a large proportion of whom had undoubted sympathy with the grievances of the mutineers.”¹

On the morning of 18th February, 1879, Nubar Pasha, the Prime Minister, and Sir Rivers Wilson, the Minister of Finance, were attacked by armed officers. They were roughly handled and were finally dragged to the Ministry of Finance. Lord Vivian learnt of what had transpired. He at once saw Ismail and sent this report to London :—

“ The Khedive drove with me to the Ministry of Finance, which we found besieged by a large crowd, who, however, made way respectfully for the Khedive’s carriage and cheered him. In a room on the upper floor, surrounded by the rioters, we found Nubar Pasha, Sir Rivers Wilson, and Riaz Pasha, none of them really hurt, although the two former had received very rough treatment while they were being forced from the street into the building. The Khedive, having assured himself of their safety, turned to the rioters and ordered them to leave the building on his promise that their just demands should be satisfied. ‘ If,’ he said, ‘ you are my officers, you are bound by your oath to obey me ; if you refuse, I will have you swept away.’ They obeyed him, although reluctantly and with some murmuring, begging him to leave them to settle their accounts in their own way. There were

¹ *Ibid.*, *loc.*

cries of 'Death to the dogs of Christians'. His Highness got them down the stairs and into and beyond the courtyard, where they fell back on the larger body who were besieging the gates. The Khedive commanded all of them to disperse and on their refusal to do so he ordered up the troops. They fired in the air, but a few soldiers were wounded by the mutineers' revolvers and a few of the rioters received bayonet wounds."¹

The next day the diplomatists got busy. The French and British Consuls-General called upon the Khedive. Ismail told them unequivocally that he would not be responsible for public tranquillity unless he were given his proper share in the government of the country and was allowed either to preside in person at the Council of Ministers or to select a President in whom he had confidence. He insisted that Nubar should immediately retire from the Ministry. He accused his Prime Minister of seeking to sap and undermine his authority. The Consuls-General, before agreeing to these terms, asked Nubar whether, in the event of their insisting on his remaining in office, he would guarantee public safety. He declined to give any such assurance, and tendered his resignation.

While the spokesmen of France and England thus agreed to permit Nubar to retire from the Premiership, Lord Vivian was instructed to state to the Khedive that :—

"The French and British Governments were determined to act in concert in all that concerned Egypt, and that they could not lend themselves to any modification in principle of the political and

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 75.

financial arrangements recently sanctioned by His Highness. It was to be clearly understood that the resignation of Nubar Pasha had, in the eyes of both Governments, only importance so far as the question of persons were concerned, but that it could not imply a change of system.”¹

Such language savoured of an ultimatum, and Ismail bowed to the inevitable. He could not resist both Paris and London. Two important questions had to be decided. The first was, who was to be the new Prime Minister. The second was the insistence of Sir Rivers Wilson, supported by the British Government, that Nubar be given a portfolio in the reorganized ministry. This latter proposal aggravated Ismail, and he replied to it that :—

“He could not do otherwise than bow to the will of the English and French Governments, which he had no power to resist, if they persisted in their demand for the re-entry of Nubar Pasha, but he felt bound to warn them beforehand of the consequences, so that they might not blame him hereafter if the new order of things should break down, or if disturbances should again arise.”²

The French Government considered, in view of what Ismail had said, that it would be unwise to insist on the readmission of Nubar. The British Foreign office assented, but “accompanied the concession with a warning to the Khedive that His Highness was responsible for the recent difficulties in Egypt, and that if similar difficulties should occur again, the consequences would be very serious to him”.

The Consuls-General of France and England

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 87.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 89.

followed up this menace with the elaboration of a programme of joint action. It provided, according to Lord Cromer, that :—

(1) The Khedive was not in any case to be present at Cabinet Councils.

(2) Prince Tewfik, the Heir-apparent to the Khedivate, who had been proposed by Ismail, was to be appointed President of the Council of Ministers, and

(3) The English and French members of the Cabinet were to have a right of veto over any proposed measures.

Although the Khedive was thus allowed to reign and not to rule, and although his Ministers ruled subject to the veto of Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières, Lord Vivian and Sir Rivers Wilson failed to see eye to eye. The British Consul-General was not in favour of the complete effacement of the Khedive. Things reached such a pass that *Modern Egypt* affirms that "the disagreements between Lord Vivian and Sir Rivers Wilson were doing a great deal of harm".¹ Downing Street could not permit this state of affairs to continue. On 15th March, 1879, the British Consul-General was called to London. On 20th March Sir Frank Lascelles arrived to take over Lord Vivian's duties. He was instructed "to give his cordial support to Sir Rivers Wilson in his dealings with the Khedive".

Shortly after the arrival of the new British Consul-General, the Egyptian question entered a new phase. On 6th April the European members of the Ministry became convinced that the Khedive was undermining their authority. They accordingly laid before him

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 96.

a formal protest against the line of conduct attributed to him. He retaliated by summoning the members of the diplomatic corps and telling them that the discontent in the country had reached such a state that radical measures were necessary. He said :—

“The nation protests against the declaration of bankruptcy which is contemplated by Sir Rivers Wilson, and demands the formation of a purely Egyptian Ministry, responsible to the Chamber of Deputies.”

The Khedive added that Prince Tewfik tendered his resignation and would be replaced by Chérif Pasha. “I shall continue to govern,” he went on to say, “in accordance with the rescript of 28th August, which sanctions the principle of ministerial responsibility. The decree of 18th November, 1876, which has been negotiated by Messrs. Goschen and Joubert, will be strictly observed.”

A decree was issued, in due course, naming Chérif Pasha President of the Council and charging him with the formation of a new Ministry. Ismail thought of his Constantinople “observer”, Abraham Bey, when thus dealing with the conditions which were developing in Cairo. He knew that unless the Sultan would agree to his being deposed, France and England would hardly go so far as to constrain him to abdicate unless untoward events were to force their hands. He accordingly wanted to know whether Paris and London were bringing pressure to bear upon the Sublime Porte. On 13th April two replies came from Abraham. The first said :—

“I have received the orders of my august master. I am following them to the letter. I saw the Grand

Vizir this morning. He said to me : ' We have heard nothing officially from France or England. Unofficial communications carry no weight with the Council of Ministers.' "

The second touched upon another phase of the same question. It brought out the fact that :—

" A great deal of intrigue is going on. Halim Pasha is at the palace every day and remains for hours with the Sultan. I do not think that he speaks in favour of the Khedive, but, fortunately, His Majesty has not a very high opinion of Halim Pasha." ¹

All through the correspondence between Ismail Pasha and Abraham, covering the period from this date to that of the abdication of the Khedive, the name of Prince Halim plays a prominent part. He would have been the heir to the Khedivate if the law of succession had not been changed. He sought to profit by the troubles besetting Ismail Pasha in order to regain his old inheritance. He went further than that ; he endeavoured to have the Khedive deposed so that he could take over the reins of state. It would appear from the letters and telegrams and other evidence that two Ambassadors accredited to the Sublime Porte watched this wire-pulling with something more than platonic interest.

All these intrigues were followed by the American Consul-General stationed at Cairo. The records of the Legation of the United States show that he was a keen observer who kept the Washington Department of State fully posted in regard to what was transpiring. An unofficial letter written by him on

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, Abraham File, 13th April, 1879.

21st March, 1879, to William M. Evarts, who was then President Hayes' Secretary of State, shows just what this Consular Officer thought of the conduct of the French and British Governments. In fact, he put his views into the shape of an unofficial letter because, to quote his own words, he desired to mention some things that he "did not wish to put in an official dispatch". Writing thus without restraint, he said :—

"It is impossible to account for the course pursued by England and France towards Egypt on any purely financial grounds. The groups of stock speculators at Paris and London, who furnish information, control newspapers, and to a large extent create public opinion in regard to Egyptian matters, are, of course, only interested in questions of finance, and desire to increase the value of their bonds, but their Governments, and especially the English, must have some other object in view. It would almost seem to a disinterested observer that the object was to provoke a revolt if possible, to have an excuse to take possession of the country.

"Whatever blame may be attached to the Khedive for incurring the present immense indebtedness of Egypt, he has, in my opinion, for the last two years done everything in his power to reduce expenses and satisfy his creditors."¹

The signature to this letter is that of E. E. Farman, the man who subsequently became a judge of the Mixed Courts of Egypt, and who, at a still later period, published the volume on Egyptian politics which has already been quoted in these pages. In this

¹ Archives, American Legation, Cairo, vol. xv, p. 140.

particular instance he was not writing for publication. The opinions he expressed, whether they be correct or incorrect, are of value because they represent the interpretation placed upon the politics of the day by an observer whose duty it was to comment upon them.

It is not difficult to follow the workings of Judge Farman's mind. He was convinced that the Khedive was a victim of what would now be called the "money-power". One of his dispatches to Washington makes this perfectly clear. He there wrote :—

"England and France have used their authority to compel Egypt to pay interest to an extent utterly beyond its capacity, and that too on money that it had never had. The bonds were originally sold for from sixty to seventy cents on a dollar, and it is even asserted by those who are in a position to know the facts that, after the payment of baksheesh, commissions, and other expenses, not more than fifty cents on a dollar was ever paid into the treasury, and many of the present holders have paid only thirty and forty cents on the dollar for their bonds. It is on the full face of these that six per cent interest has been authoritatively demanded. Many of the present holders, and especially the more influential portion of them, were interested in making the original loans, and have already made fortunes in their speculations in Egyptian securities." ¹

Americans love to moralize. The Consul-General who thus pilloried Egypt's creditors in this confidential official report took the Chancelleries of Europe over the coals. He held that instead of browbeating the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

fellaheen in order to force them to reimburse amounts which the Khedive had never collected,

“the European Governments should have said to these men (the moneylenders) : ‘A great wrong has been attempted against the people of Egypt, and however much its Government may be blamed, you have participated in it ; and before you ask even our moral support in enforcing your demands, you should reduce them to the amount you have actually loaned.’ ”¹

¹ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER XVII

THE LAST PHASE

DURING these eventful weeks the Commission of Inquiry diligently applied itself to its task. It heard witnesses, put Ministers, Mudirs, and even the Monarch on the grill, and finally submitted an epoch-making Report. The first draft was prepared by Lord Cromer, then Major Baring. It underwent a good many modifications before the final text was approved. Its French was revised by M. de Blignières.¹

The Report began by stating that Egypt was bankrupt, and had been in a state of bankruptcy since 6th April, 1876, when the Khedive suspended the Treasury bills which fell due on that date. Interest on the debt had been paid since that default, and £2,645,000 had been devoted to the sinking fund, but the Commissioners explained that this was done through juggling with figures. The Report proclaimed the principle that paying coupons, under such circumstances, is distributing fictitious dividends. *Le pays est saigné à blanc*—"the country is bled white", said M. de Blignières in his revised edition of Lord Cromer's French.

After indulging in such generalities, the Commissioners laid down three cardinal principles. The first was that no sacrifice should be demanded from the creditors until every reasonable sacrifice has been made by the debtors. Lord Cromer felt so convinced

¹ Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 110, note.

of the appositeness and justice of this rule that he allowed M. de Blignières to write : *on n'a pas à insister sur l'équité de ce principe*—"it is unnecessary to insist upon the equity of this principle." He did not explain, however, how equity could be invoked on behalf of moneylenders who had charged such usurious rates of interest that the Cave Report attributed the woes of the Khedive primarily to their rapacity.

The second principle insisted upon by the Commissioners was that, in deciding on the degrees of sacrifice which should be imposed on the different classes of creditors, it was desirable to conform as much as possible to the procedure indicated by the Egyptian code as that which should be followed in dealing with the estate of a private individual who was bankrupt. The third principle was that it was necessary that any general arrangement which might be adopted should be made obligatory on all interested parties.

Having disposed of these preliminary matters, the Commissioners dealt with the Khedive. He had surrendered to his creditors most of the estates of the Khedivial family. This had been done in October, 1878. It will be recalled that these properties were then mortgaged for £8,500,000 at 7 per cent per annum, but that the loan realized but £5,992,000. The proceeds of these bonds were about to be applied to the liquidation of the floating debt. It was now necessary to fix the amount of the Civil List of the Khedive and of the Khedivial family.

The question of the sacrifices to be imposed on the Egyptian taxpayers presented greater difficulties. The Commissioners handled this subject in a masterly

manner. Their work has stood the test of time. It afforded an admirable starting-point for further reforms. It represented the first serious attempt to solve the difficulties of the Egyptian financial situation. Reform was its dominant note.

Secrets are never kept in Egypt. It may be that the Commission of Inquiry made no attempt to keep its recommendations a secret during those days when the original Baring text was being elaborated and subsequently put into Voltairean French. But, whether it did or did not, all Cairo knew what it was going to say before it did so officially. The Khedive resented the imputation that he was a bankrupt. He took the position that Egypt had not failed to pay the coupons upon her bonded indebtedness, and that she had provided for her sinking fund. He refused to admit that figures had been played with in order to obtain this result. He added :—

“My family has given up a large part of its landed estates in order to help the State. We are prepared to make still greater sacrifices. The jewels of the ladies of the Khedivial family are at the disposal of the creditors of Egypt. Every acre that we own and every diamond that we possess is at the beck and call of the bondholders. We refuse to admit that we are bankrupt.”

He may have been mistaken. Crown jewels cannot stop a flood or dam a tidal wave. But it is his point of view that is being considered. It was not that of a dishonest man who was trying to hide his assets in order to turn a bankruptcy into a joy-day. It was that of an honourable debtor who was prepared to strip himself of his shirt and to ask his relatives to

deprive themselves of their pearls so that he could have at least one more chance to save his name and fame.

When, therefore, the Commission of Inquiry submitted its report on 8th April, 1879, it found itself in the presence of a new Ministry. Prince Tewfik and the European Ministers had been dismissed on the previous day. Chérif Pasha, the grandfather of the present Queen of Egypt, was the new Prime Minister. The Cabinet was obviously hostile to the Commission. M. de Lesseps and his colleagues thus felt constrained to tender their resignations to the Khedive. They were accepted.

This ministerial crisis caused the American Consul-General to address an official report to Washington. It is dated 24th April, 1879. Its opening paragraphs read :—

“I have had the honour to send you several dispatches giving accounts of the disturbances and ministerial crises that have recently taken place in Egypt.

“I am well aware that this country is too far away and that our interests here are too small to give the same importance in the United States to the details of what is transpiring as is given to them in Europe.

“I do not, however, think that I ought to omit giving you some more facts as well as my views concerning the Anglo-French reign in Egypt. . . .

“The whole movement [the dismissal of the Anglo-French Ministry] is a popular one here, and its popularity arises to a great extent from the fact that this anomalous attempt at governing by a mixed and irresponsible ministry in the interests of foreign

creditors has proved, as it ought to have done, a total failure.

"It may, for aught I know, still be continued by foreign force : but that will not change the fact that it has been a complete failure and that the whole thing was politically a mistake and morally a great wrong."

The Consul-General felt called upon to elaborate this point of view. He did so in these terms :—

"It was politically a mistake to interfere with the internal government of a foreign state solely in the pecuniary interest of a class of creditors who sought to enrich themselves by investments at low prices in precarious foreign stocks bearing a much larger rate of interest than that paid in their own country. There was scarcely a precedent for such interference except so far as one can be found in the last disastrous occupation of Mexico, and it was wholly contrary to long-established rules as to the action of Governments in securing payment to their citizens or their claims arising from contracts with other Governments.

"It was a great wrong morally because it was an attempt to enforce the payment from the people of Egypt of more money than they could afford to pay and more than they were morally bound to pay, however able to do it. No European nation would have ever submitted for a moment to any such exactions, and one-fourth of the pressure that has been brought to bear on Egypt would have produced a rebellion in any of the States of our Union."¹

The new Ministry, whose advent to power caused

¹ Archives, American Legation, Cairo, vol. xv, p. 183.

Consul-General Farman to send to his Government the dispatch containing the passage just quoted, met the report submitted by the Commission of Inquiry by offering counter-recommendations. Lord Cromer declares that its proposals were impossible of execution. It held that the idea of national bankruptcy was as intolerable as it was dishonourable. It, however, urged the necessity of reducing the interest on the national debt from 6 to 5 per cent, although hopes were held out that payment at the higher rate would be resumed at some later period. Thus, proclaims *Modern Egypt*, citing the language used by the Commission of Inquiry, the plan outlined by the Chamber of Notables "protested against a declaration of bankruptcy, but in reality bore witness to its existence".¹

The Report submitted by the advisers of the Khedive also differed from that signed by M. de Lesseps in that it made no mention of a Civil List.

This omission was anathema to the bondholders. It was, to a certain extent, a defiance of France and England in the sense that it indicated that Ismail held to his original preference for autocracy. This factor and other circumstances prompted Lord Salisbury to address a dispatch to Sir Frank Lascelles on 25th April in which it was said :—

"The Khedive is well aware that the considerations which compel Her Majesty's Government to take an interest in the destinies of Egypt have led them to pursue no other policy than that of developing the resources and securing the good government of

¹ Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 125.

the country. They have hitherto considered the independence of the Khedive and the maintenance of his dynasty as important conditions for the attainment of these ends ; and the same sentiments, they are well assured, animated the Government of France. We would rather assume that the decision thus hastily taken by His Highness, both with respect to the future conduct of the reform and the attitude he proposes to take towards the two Governments, is not final." ¹

After having thus laid down his predicate, the British Foreign Minister made it clear that his Cairo spokesman was to inform the Khedive that if His Highness persisted in declining "the assistance of European Ministers whom the two Powers may place at his disposal", England and France would feel free to devise "the arrangements best calculated to secure the good government and prosperity of the country".

It is quite probable that a copy of this dispatch was communicated to the Sublime Porte. The Sultan looked upon himself as being the liege lord of Egypt. The fate of his vassal interested him. Abdul Hamid was then in the full plenitude of that mental vigour which made him for so many years a factor in the international politics of Europe. He was not an effete ruler who merely collected birds and allowed his Ministers to brush him aside. He wanted to know what was transpiring. London and Paris thus felt that they could not oust Ismail without considering the wishes of Abdul Hamid or weighing the cost of a breach with him. And the Khedive, knowing this,

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 133.

did his utmost to obtain the support of the Sultan and of the Grand Vizir.

A note was thus drafted by Ismail and sent to Abraham Bey, under date of 1st May, 1879. It was intended for submission to the Grand Vizir. It sets forth the Khedive's side of his relations with England and France. After speaking of the creation of the Commission of Inquiry it goes on to tell of the formation of the Nubar Ministry and of the grant of portfolios to MM. de Blignières and Wilson. One of the salient paragraphs of the memorandum reads :—

“ Contrary to what had been expected of them [de Blignières and Wilson] these Ministers devoted their time and their efforts to politics more than to business. They sought to exclude the Khedive from his government while insisting upon holding him responsible. They arbitrarily kept out of the government service all the men who had any experience or influence. They offended the people by refusing to wear the national dress and by presenting themselves at their Ministries and at official gatherings wearing a hat and not the conventional tarboosh, proclaiming at the same time that they were French and English Ministers and that they were not called upon to consider the Turkish element. All the foreign officials in their wake adopt the same attitude. As soon as they took office they discharged large numbers of the native staff. They gave as their reason the necessity for economy, but they replaced the men thus discharged by Europeans at higher salaries. The same Ministry also discharged most of the army without paying their past wages due. In a word, the Ministry lost the confidence of the country.”

The report then goes on to say that the troubles of 18th February, 1879, brought about the resignation of Nubar Pasha, but that MM. de Blignières and Wilson induced their governments to force the Khedive to give Nubar a portfolio in the reorganized Cabinet and then constrained Prince Tewfik, the new Prime Minister, to accept Riaz Pasha as his Minister of the Interior. Finally, says the note, discontent in the country reached such a pass that Prince Tewfik had to resign. Chérif Pasha then assumed the reins of Government and met with an enthusiastic reception from the populace.¹

It is not contended that this memorandum gives an accurate description of the line of conduct followed by the Frenchman and the Englishman whose names figure in it. All that is pointed out is that it faithfully presents what Ismail would like the historian of the future to accept as his statement of his case. Here is the comment which the Grand Vizir made upon the facts as thus communicated to him :—

“ It was really time to dissolve the old Council of Ministers. From what this note tells me it was nothing but a European occupation, and an attempt to take over the power of the Khedive. I congratulate His Highness upon the success of his efforts and I approve of the present system by means of which His Highness safeguards the future of the country. He must strain every effort to maintain it. . . . The Government (of His Majesty the Sultan) will make every sacrifice and will insist upon supporting the Khedive to the very last.”²

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, Abraham File, 1879.

² *Ibid.*

This message giving Ismail's action the stamp of the approval of the Grand Vizir was a source of great satisfaction to the Khedive. He determined to consolidate his position by instructing Abraham to seek an early audience with the Sultan and to say to His Majesty :—

“When Nubar had formed his Ministry he said to all of us that this system [ministerial responsibility] had been introduced into Egypt merely to try it out and that if it succeeded it would be extended to the entire Ottoman Empire. It began in Egypt with finance as its background, but politics are really what was envisaged.”¹

While Ismail was doing his best to enlist the support of Abdul Hamid, France and England were not idle. On 19th June Sir Frank Lascelles, acting under Lord Salisbury's instructions, made the following communication to the Khedive:—

“The French and English Governments are agreed to advise Your Highness officially to abdicate and leave Egypt. Should Your Highness follow this advice, our Governments will act in concert in order that a suitable Civil List should be assigned to you, and that the order of succession, in virtue of which Prince Tewfik will succeed Your Highness, should not be disturbed. We must not conceal from Your Highness that if you refuse to abdicate, and if you compel the Cabinets of London and Paris to address themselves directly to the Sultan, you will not be able to count upon obtaining a Civil List or upon maintaining the succession in favour of Prince Tewfik.”²

¹ *Ibid.*

² Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 135.

When the British and French Consuls-General handed this ultimatum to the Khedive he asked that time should be given him to consider the matter. On 21st June he informed them that the question had been referred to the Sultan. He did this because he had submitted it to the Sublime Porte. The American Consul-General, in a report to Washington dated 27th June, 1879, thus sums up what took place :—

“ On the evening of the 21st instant, the Khedive gave to the French and English Consuls-General his reply to their demands for his abdication. His Highness had been given 48 hours for this reply, instead of the time mentioned in my dispatch No. 303 of the 20th instant. His answer was, in substance, that he had telegraphed to Constantinople for instructions and had not yet received a reply ; that when it came he would have to trouble them to come and receive his answer. He added that he could not relieve himself of the responsibilities of the government of Egypt without the orders of the Sultan.

“ The French Consul, much irritated by this unexpected response of the Khedive, said to him : ‘ How long has Your Highness been the humble servant of the Porte ? ’—‘ Since my birth, *Monsieur*,’ was the quick reply of the Khedive. Other conversations took place which, on the part of the French Consul-General, were at least animated.

“ Two days afterwards the German Consul-General and the acting Austro-Hungarian Consul-General also advised the Khedive to abdicate, and the following day the Italian Consul-General did the same.

“ All possible pressure was brought to bear upon

the Khedive to obtain his abdication without awaiting the decision of the Sultan. He was promised in that case a civil list, certain private property and the succession of his son, and threatened, in case he did not yield, with having his uncle Halim Pasha as his successor and being sent away without anything.”¹

Not only were cajolery, threats, and intimidation thus resorted to by Europe in order to force Ismail Pasha to abdicate, but the French and German Consuls-General applied means which an English gentleman's sense of propriety made it impossible for Her Britannic Majesty's representative to sanction. The American Consul-General thus brings out this characteristic detail :—

“On the 24th the French and German Consuls-General went to the Palace at two o'clock in the morning and had him (the Khedive) called, causing great terror in the harim by the fear of an assassination, to inform him that they had come to give him the last chance to abdicate in favour of his son, and that in a few hours Halim Pasha would be appointed and it would be too late. The Khedive told them that he thought there would be time enough yet to abdicate, said he would see them the next day, and, bidding them good-night, went back to his room.”²

While the diplomatists accredited to the Egyptian Government were thus resorting to both fair and unfair methods in order to force the Khedive to abdicate, he kept in close touch with Abraham Bey. On 22nd June a telegram reached Ismail Pasha from his confidential agent reading :—

“Osman Pasha has just told me that the Grand

¹ Archives, American Legation, Cairo, vol. xv, p. 239. ² *Ibid.*, p. 240.

Vizir told him that the Sultan told him that his wish is that nothing disagreeable may happen to the Khedive and that, in the present grave circumstances, His Highness should at once submit to His Majesty and to the Sublime Porte any propositions which the Powers may make. The Khedive should therefore answer that he had written to his Sovereign and could do nothing but await a reply. And this is the only way of overcoming the difficulties and I pray you to let His Highness know this.”¹

Later on the same day the “observer” telegraphed the Khedive that the Council of Ministers had held a meeting and that it was believed that the Sultan would protest against the stand taken by the Powers as being in violation of the sovereign rights of His Majesty. A further dispatch of the same day said that the Turkish Government had lodged a telegraphic protest with England and France. A still later message added that Prince Lobanoff, the Russian ambassador, had told Abraham confidentially that Russia did not approve of the action taken by France and England.

These reports encouraged Ismail, and on the same day he telegraphed Abraham :—

“I count as usual upon your zeal and your devotion. You must advise me, not day by day, but hour by hour, of everything that goes on and of all that is said about Egypt in the Embassies, at the Palace, and at the Sublime Porte. Take all possible steps to get this information and telegraph me fully and without reserve, for at the present moment it is essential that I know every minute detail.”²

¹ Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Cairo, Abraham File, 1879.

² *Ibid.*

A rumour reached the Sultan on 23rd June that the Khedive had abdicated. It took over twenty-four hours before it could be denied officially. But this disconcerting news did not arrest the activity of the ubiquitous Abraham. While he was moving heaven and earth to keep Ismail posted, a dispatch came to him from the Khedive to the effect that the Consuls-General of England, France, and Germany¹ had awakened him at three o'clock in the morning to tell him that they had received a cable from Constantinople apprising them that the Council of Ministers had decided to withdraw the firman of 1873 and to make Halim Pasha Viceroy. They added, said the dispatch, that His Majesty had announced that he intended to give his Imperial sanction to this measure. The Khedive instructed his representative to repair forthwith to the Palace and to find out the whole truth.

The next day, 26th July, this answer was sent to Cairo :—

“His Majesty has authorized me to telegraph Your Highness that the statement made by the Consuls of England and France (no mention of Germany) is entirely untrue. Details follow.”²

The Royal Egyptian Archives contain no mention of the promised details. Events moved too rapidly to justify the sending of any further information. The Khedive obviously did not know that his end was so near. He had, on 25th June, prepared a decree under which the army was to be increased to 150,000 men.³

¹ The American Consul-General refers only to the French and German Consuls-General.

² Royal Egyptian Archives, Abdine Palace, Abraham File, 1879.

³ Cromer, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 140.

Some wild proposals, having for their object the inundation of the country around Alexandria, were said to have been discussed. But on 26th June two telegrams reached Cairo. Both were sent by the Sultan. One was addressed to "Ismail Pasha, ex-Khedive of Egypt". It read :—

"It has been proved that your maintenance at your post can result only in multiplying and in aggravating present difficulties. His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan, has therefore decided, in conformity with a decision of His Council of Ministers, to appoint Muhammed Tewfik Pasha Khedive of Egypt and an Imperial *irade* in this sense has just been promulgated."

The other telegram was addressed to Tewfik Pasha, Khedive of Egypt. It advised him of his nomination to the Khedivate. These two messages told Ismail that further resistance was useless. He knew that his last hope had disappeared. He sent at once for Prince Tewfik, and, in the presence of his Ministers, made over his power to his successor. "The scene," writes Lord Cromer, "is said to have been affecting. Both father and son showed emotion. It was desirable that there should be no delay in the inauguration of the new Khedive. It took place at once. At 6.30 p.m. on 26th June, 1879, Sir Frank Lascelles telegraphed to Lord Salisbury :—

"A royal salute on Prince Tewfik's accession was fired this evening from the citadel, where His Highness held an official reception, which was attended by the whole diplomatic and consular corps, the Ministers, Government officials, and a large number of people." ¹

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 140.

One further scene remained to be enacted. It was undesirable that the ex-Khedive should remain in Egypt. He decided to seek an asylum at Naples, where the King of Italy had placed a residence at his disposal. On 30th June he left Cairo for Alexandria. He made known that he did not wish any official notice to be taken of his departure. A large crowd, nevertheless, assembled to wish him well. Before entering his railway carriage, Ismail addressed a few words to the people who were present, telling them that on leaving Egypt he confided his son, the Khedive, to their care. An eye-witness stated that "the scene was so affecting that there were few among the spectators who were able to refrain from tears".

The British Consul thus describes what took place at Alexandria :—

"The deck of the *Mahroussa* was crowded with officials and European residents who had come to take leave of Ismail Pasha. His Highness met everywhere, both on shore and on board, with marked respect and consideration. Though his features bore the traces of strong recent emotion, he bore up manfully, and was quite cheerful, addressing a pleasant word of thanks to everybody who took leave of him, and shaking hands." ¹

Lord Cromer, who cannot be classed as a friendly historian of the reign of the first of the Khedives, thus sums up its epilogue :—

"If Ismail Pasha's rule had been bad, his fall was at least dignified. His worst enemies must have pitied a man in the hour of his distress who had stood so high and who had fallen so low. 'Who,' says Bacon,

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 142.

'can see worse days than he that, yet living, doth follow at the funeral of his own reputation?' Any chance moralist who may have watched the *Mahroussa* steaming out of Alexandria harbour on that summer afternoon must perforce have heaved a sigh over one of the most striking instances that the world has ever known of golden opportunities lost."¹

The man who has been thus so cruelly misjudged was finally permitted to take up his abode at Constantinople. He died on 2nd March, 1895. He did not pass away "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung". Those who came into contact with him loved him and shed tears at his bier.

When Lord Cromer published his *Modern Egypt* in 1908 he said that "the events in Ismail Pasha's reign in Egypt are too recent for an impartial verdict to be passed upon them". Practically a quarter of a century has elapsed since that statement was made. It is, perhaps, still too soon to view the net results of the Khedive's rule in their proper perspective. But it is not too early to get the facts into the record. The trouble with the transcript which has been handed down from the days of the brilliant Alfred Milner and his *England in Egypt* to the present moment, is that it has not had all the facts in it. "The events in Ismail Pasha's reign in Egypt" cannot be made the subject matter of an impartial verdict until all of them are known.

It is probable that this impartial verdict will proclaim that Ismail's abdication was one of those decisions which the heart deeply regrets but which the mind reluctantly sanctions. He was generations

¹ *Ibid.*, *l.c.*

ahead of his time. The world never forgives the Pathfinder. It distrusts the man who sees far into the future. It is intolerant of the optimist whose courage causes him to smile when the clouds are black. The civilization of yesterday, like that of to-day, applauds brilliancy, but it clings to mediocrity. It had no place for the Khedive because he was too big for his environment.

Present world-wide conditions bring out the difficulties with which France and England were confronted in 1879. Ismail had come into power during the days of a tidal wave of prosperity born of the American Civil War. These fat years had been prolonged by the intelligent efforts made by him in 1866 to avert a financial crisis and by the opening of the Suez Canal. When the inevitable reaction came in 1875, it was too much to expect of human nature to ask him to think in terms of the new conditions confronting Egypt. He could no more accept the altered status than can the *nouveaux riches* created by the Great War readjust themselves to the realities of the present day.

The parallel between the plight of the Khedive and that in which Europe and America now find themselves must not, however, be pressed too far, because the great prosperity of the Valley of the Nile and the subsequent reaction were localized phenomena. France and England were able to play the part of doctors, but the world is now a universal hospital and there are no convalescents to look after the dying.

That Ismail had to be sacrificed upon the altar of economic laws may be admitted. But it does not follow

from this that the impartial verdict of future generations will approve of the tender solicitude shown for the interests of the bondholders. It jars upon principles of fundamental fair play to see Ismail exiled because he was caught in the vortex of prosperity and yet to behold the money-lenders receiving their pound of flesh with its drop of blood. And yet this is what happened. The Khedive collected from capitalists in 1873 and 1879, to cite but two instances, an aggregate amount of £23,802,000. In return for this sum he issued bonds for £40,500,000 with interest at 7 per cent.¹ The *fellah* was forced by France and England to shoulder this burden. The bill brokers were thus permitted to bask in the sunshine of Khedivial prosperity and also to gloat over the spoils of the aftermath. And, to make matters worse, within less than a year after Ismail's enforced abdication, French financiers were given an opportunity to acquire for £880,000 that fifteen per cent participation in the profits of the Suez Canal Company which Ismail the Maligned had turned over to his successor and which netted the lucky profiteers in 1932 over a million pounds sterling.

If Lord Cromer felt that it was too early in 1908 to pass judgement upon "the events in Ismail Pasha's reign in Egypt", the American Consul-General, E. E. Farman, did not hesitate to put this verdict into his official report dated 27th June, 1879:—

"There will be very different opinions not only as to the merits and demerits of the reign of Ismail Pasha, but also as to the arbitrary act of the Powers in procuring his deposition or abdication without any

¹ Mulhall, *op. cit.*, p. 526.

request of his own people and against the wish of all the leading personages of the State, civil, religious, and military.

"However much may be said against him, one thing is beyond dispute : Egypt, during the sixteen years of his reign, has advanced more in all that pertains to modern civilization than in the hundred, or perhaps five hundred years next preceding and more than it will be likely to advance for a long time to come ; and for this advancement the country is almost wholly indebted to him."

After having made this sweeping statement the American Consular officer hastened to add :—

"Unfortunately for His Highness personally and perhaps for his country, he had seen too much of Europe and had conceived the idea that a great African State, perhaps Empire, could be established on a European model on the banks of the Nile and extending from the Mediterranean to the Equator.

"It is easy, as the world's history shows, successfully to plant new colonies ; but to create new and vigorous states by engrafting modern civilization on the stocks of old ones, is an experiment the possible success of which remains to be demonstrated. No one has tried more faithfully and persistently this process than the Khedive, and he has attained a certain measure of success, but in so doing he has incurred an immense debt and ruined himself." ¹

Not a word is said in this official confidential survey of the reign of the fallen sovereign about the profligacy of the deposed ruler. On the contrary, Judge Farman boldly blames stock-market speculators

¹ Archives, American Legation, Cairo, vol. xv, p. 241.

and newspaper propagandists for the fall of Ismail Pasha. Here are his exact words :—

“ It is not my purpose to enter at this time into any details concerning the Egyptian debt or the causes that have led to the fall of the Khedive.

“ I shall only add that the newspaper war that has been carried on in Europe against him for the last two years, principally through the influence of groups of large stock speculators and by means of their money, has created an erroneous public opinion and very unjust prejudices. Enough can be truthfully said against the rule of any oriental prince ; but the overthrow of the Khedive is not at all or only in a small measure due to the causes that have served as the texts of the principal newspaper articles that have been published in Egypt since the commencement of the financial crisis.”¹

No attempt will here be made to weigh the accuracy of this judgement which has now been on file in the Archives of the American Department of State for over half a century. Suffice it to say that if the historian yet unborn will probably accept the enforced abdication of Ismail as an almost inevitable consequence of conditions which brush aside the personal equation, he will not countenance, when all of the facts are before him, the attack upon the reputation of the Khedive. He will rebel against the strictures of Sir Auckland Colvin, Viscount Milner, the Earl of Cromer, the Marquess of Zetland, and the numerous authors, English and French, who have followed in their wake. And when he does so the lines of Shakespeare will flash across his mind :—

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

“ Good name, in man or woman, dear my Lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls ;
Who steals my purse steals trash ; 'tis some-
thing, nothing ;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to
thousands ;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed.”

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